

Yeadon Westfield Infant School Attendance Policy

[agreed in conjunction with the Aireborough Learning Partnership Trust]

2018- Review 2021

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all children, and expects our staff, governors and volunteers to share this commitment. This policy should be read in conjunction with all other school policies.

Introduction, Ethos and Background

This policy sets out the procedures through which we seek to **raise attendance, improve punctuality** and, as a consequence, **raise levels of achievement**. Parents/ Carers are required by law to ensure that their children receive an education.

This policy is written with regard for the legal powers and duties included in the following:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5);
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010; and
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

We believe that there is a clear link between attendance, punctuality and positive outcomes for children and young people. Research findings and learning from best practice shows that:

- Pupils must attend regularly to achieve their full potential
- Pupils who miss out on school whether as a result of regular lateness or lack of attendance can feel vulnerable and left behind
- Leave in term time is disruptive and can seriously affect your child's education.
- Pupils who consistently miss 17+ days in a school year lose one full grade in their GCSEs
- Unauthorised absence can lead to prosecution.

The following shows the link between % attendance at school and number of days absent:

- 98% = Fewer than 4 days absent in one school year.
- 95% = Fewer than 10 days absent in one school year.
- 90% = 4 weeks (20 days) absent in one school year.
- 85% = 5½ weeks (28 days) absent in one school year.
- 80% = 7½ weeks (38 days) absent in one school year.

Over a period of 5 school years, students with an average attendance of 85-90% will have missed half a school year of education while students with an average attendance of 80% over the same period will have missed a whole school year.

Our aim is to therefore is to encourage full attendance and punctuality for all pupils at Yeadon Westfield Infant School

We do this by:

- Creating a warm and welcoming environment
- Ensuring that students feel safe at all times
- Developing a strong sense of belonging within our pupils
- Offering a curriculum that engages and inspires
- Ensuring high quality teaching at all times
- Encouraging, praising and celebrating achievement and success

This policy outlines the process by which parents/carers can request leave under exceptional circumstances for their child/ren. In addition this policy provides clear procedures regarding absence through illness and the school's response to illness and absence. This policy follows the latest Government legislation and guidelines. It has been developed and agreed in conjunction with the Aireborough Learning Partnership Trust to ensure consistency, fairness and clear decision making in relation to school attendance and absence.

Roles and Responsibilities

At Yeadon Westfield Infant School we are clear that attendance and punctuality are everybody's responsibility. By working in partnership with parents, carers, pupils and other professionals, we seek to ensure every child has an attendance that meets or exceeds the school target of 97%. Outlined below are the key roles and responsibilities within school and how they will help to ensure this target is achieved:

Governing Body

The governing body will set policy and monitor attendance and punctuality. The designated governor for attendance and punctuality will support the head teacher and attendance team to ensure that procedures are followed and parents/carers are clear about their responsibilities.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will provide a strategic lead throughout the school by line managing key members of staff, supporting other school leaders in the effective deployment of resources, ensuring compliance with the policy outlined and having oversight of cases that are being prepared for formal prosecution. The Headteacher will also be responsible for data analysis and reporting to the Governing Body.

Attendance Team

The team, with the headteacher, will have an overview of attendance and priorities within the school. They will be instrumental in identifying attendance trends for both individuals and cohorts of students. Alongside this, they will be responsible for identifying barriers to attendance and developing and implementing strategies to help pupils overcome these barriers. They will be integral to ensuring attendance remains a priority for staff and children and will do so through regular communication, sharing of data, supporting difficult cases and rewarding excellent attendance as well as improvement.

The Attendance Team plays a critical role in the management of absence through illness, leave or other means. They are the key point of contact between home and school and will ensure contact is made in all cases on the first day of absence. Where absence is ongoing, they will provide a bridge between home and school and will develop an understanding of the barriers to attendance and, through liaison with other colleagues in school, plan to overcome those barriers.

They will ensure that registers are completed and that follow up systems are enacted where there are any concerns.

Class Teacher

It is the class teacher's responsibility to ensure the register is done within the first ten minutes of the morning and afternoon, without exception.

Supporting Attendance

In order to support great attendance, we will record two attendance sessions a day (AM and PM) and report on attendance at fixed periods throughout the year. During lessons, we will ensure registers are complete and that all children are accounted for as this is a key part of our safeguarding protocols. Great attendance will be acknowledged and celebrated. Pupils who we feel need to improve their attendance will be set targets and supported in identifying barriers to attendance and, wherever possible, removing or overcoming these barriers.

Attendance data will be used to plan for effective strategies, analysis the impact of the school's work and identify priorities and areas for improvement. Data will be used to:

- Monitor individual absence and lateness to both school and lessons
- Identify patterns and trends in attendance and punctuality
- Identify students who should be celebrated for great attendance or significant improvement

Term Time Absence and Requests for Leave

Parents/Carers do not have the right to remove their children from school during term time without prior permission and agreement by the Headteacher or those granted that level of authorisation by the Headteacher. In the event of exceptional circumstances parents may request leave during term time in writing and using an Exceptional Circumstances request form available on the school website. Each application will be considered by the Headteacher, following a conversation with the parents/carers, who will decide whether or not the absence is to be authorised and the number of days. **Please note leave will not be considered retrospectively.**

In the event that unauthorised leave is taken, then the school will consider a fixed penalty fine.

Please note, it has been agreed across the Aireborough Trust that we cannot take into consideration the impact of other Local Authority school holidays, continental shift patterns or public service shift patterns when considering holiday and leave requests.

Fixed Penalty Fines

Under the latest Government Legislation parents / carers who take their children out of school during term time, without authorisation, may be issued with a fixed penalty fine by the Local Authority and could face possible prosecution in court.

In Leeds, a penalty notice will be issued for unauthorised absences of five days or more within a twelve week period and as an Aireborough Learning Partnership Trust School we are fully committed to this policy.

The penalty notice includes absences for holidays as well as other unauthorised absence. If a penalty notice is issued, it will be for the whole period of absence. So the penalty would be the same for an absence of five days or ten days.

Fines are issued for each parent and each child so, for example, a family of four with two parents and two children will be fined a total of £240. The penalty will double if the notice is not paid within 21 working days. If it remains unpaid, it will be passed for prosecution at the Magistrates Court

School Responses to Absence

At Yeadon Westfield Infant School we value great attendance and work in close partnership with parents and carers to ensure every child is accessing their education. As with every school, and in line with DFE guidance, we make a distinction between 'authorised absence' and 'unauthorised absence'. Below are some examples of both, but please be aware this list is not exhaustive:

| Authorised Absence | Unauthorised absence |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical appointment (with letter)• Illness• Family bereavement• Religious observance (2 days max) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unexplained absences• Family holiday in term time• Truancy• Birthdays |

Our responses to non-attendance are evidence based and intended to be implemented at the point of most impact. Below are the key stages for parents and carers to be aware of:

97% + Attendance is positive and a cause of celebration

93% -97% Attendance is reasonable but could be improved. School will monitor.

90% - 93% Attendance is becoming a concern. A letter outlining the risk of persistent absence will be issued other than in exceptional circumstances

<90% Absence will no longer be authorised without a medical note

75% - 90% In the event that attendance is between 75% and 89.9% or if there are ten missed sessions over a twelve week period, the school will undergo a risk assessment and, unless there is absolute satisfaction that the absences were unavoidable, school will undertake the 'FastTrack' initiative in line with DFE guidance. This will then lead to a period of monitoring for twenty days and if there is no immediate improvement, a School Attendance Panel will be convened and a fixed penalty notice warning letter may be issued. Once a fixed penalty notice is issued, any further unauthorised absence could lead to a fixed penalty fine.

<75% Where attendance is below 75% there will be an ongoing risk assessment of whether to recommend a 'FastTrack' process or pursue further levels of prosecution. Only cases that have unavoidable circumstances or those that have shown significant improvement over a six week period will avoid recommendations for prosecution.

Although we are aware that there are times absence may be inevitable or unavoidable, we commit to undertaking a thorough risk assessment process for cases under 90% to ensure that our decision making is fair and consistent.

Appendix 1: Guidance on authorising absence / leave requests

| Leave categorisation | Authorised? | Number of days | Other information? |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Death of immediate family member | Yes | 5 + 1 | Up to 5 days + one day for funeral with additional consideration where required |
| Death of extended family member | Yes | 1 + 1 | One day + one day for funeral |
| Religious Observance | Yes | 2 | 2 days i.e. Eid = one day for each observance. If in doubt, |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|------|-----------------|--|
| | | | consult with local place of worship |
| Hospital Appointment | Yes | 1 | Only authorised with letter from hospital / professional |
| Medical / dental Appointment | Yes | 0.5 | Unauthorised without letter/written evidence |
| Sports Representation | Yes* | HT's Discretion | Representation at city, regional and above |
| Weddings | Yes | 1 | One day for family |
| Graduation | Yes | 1 | One day for immediate family |