

# Yeadon Westfield Infant School Attendance Policy

condensed version

[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.

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.

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

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.

### **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.

### **Safeguarding**

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health & Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying
- Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.
- Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

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

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**

<b>Leave categorisation</b>	<b>Authorised?</b>	<b>Number of days</b>	<b>Other information?</b>
<b>Death of immediate family member</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>5 + 1</b>	<b>Up to 5 days + one day for funeral with additional consideration where required</b>
<b>Death of extended family member</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>1 + 1</b>	<b>One day + one day for funeral</b>
<b>Religious Observance</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2 days i.e. Eid = one day for each observance. If in doubt, consult with local place of worship</b>
<b>Hospital Appointment</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Only authorised with letter from hospital / professional</b>

<b>Medical / dental Appointment</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>Unauthorised without letter/written evidence</b>
<b>Sports Representation</b>	<b>Yes*</b>	<b>HT's Discretion</b>	<b>Representation at city, regional and above</b>
<b>Weddings</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>One day for family</b>
<b>Graduation</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>One day for immediate family</b>