# WGPS School Attendance Policy for pupils

Date agreed: July 2022

Review date: July 2025

Signed:

## Rationale

Wylde Green Primary School bases its Attendance Policy on Guidelines set out by Birmingham LA.

The Law states that every child has the right to an education. Whilst the legal responsibility for regular school attendance rests with Parents, Governors and Staff at Wylde Green Primary School share with them, and the LA, responsibility for encouraging good attendance and improving poor attendance.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children may sometimes be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance should be resolved between the school, parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never advisable to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter is not important and may make things worse.

**The Education Act (1996) relating to School Attendance states that:-**

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.

"If in the above circumstances you, the parent, know that your child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fail without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend, you are guilty of an offence."

The court can fine you up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

**Please note that:**

a) Penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.

b) 'Parent' includes any person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of him/her.

**These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.**

## Aims & Objectives

- To maximise attendance of all children so that they can fully access the curriculum and make the best possible progress.
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school.
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents/carers to resolve any difficulties.

- To implement an effective system of rewards for pupils with good attendance
- To identify poor attendees early and address the issues surrounding poor attendance.
- To promote effective partnerships between school, parents and with other agencies.
- To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.
- To ensure that, where possible, our policy and procedures for attendance apply to Reception age pupils in order to promote good habits at an early age.

**Roles & Responsibilities**

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality.

**Governors**

- To monitor progress towards school targets for attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.

**Headteacher and Senior Leaders**

- To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately record individual pupil, group and whole school patterns.
- To feedback attendance data to Governors and provide information for them to evaluate the success of policy and practice.
- To enforce the law regarding school attendance and extended leave in term time, overseeing referrals made for fixed penalty notices and court action where necessary.

**Attendance Leader**

- To closely monitor whole school, individual and group attendance and report to the Headteacher, any concerns that arise.
- Work in partnership with families to find supportive routes to improve attendance
- To write to parents/carers when concerns arise regarding attendance
- To arrange meetings with parents/carers and other professionals to discuss attendance concerns with parents as required.
- To support the parent/carer in improving attendance for their child.
- To ensure that effective provision is made to support learning of pupils with prolonged absence due to health/medical reasons.
- To co-ordinate and record written requests for leave in term time.
- To make judgements on whether absence should be authorised or not authorised where absence has not been requested.
- To manage reward systems that are in place for good attendance.
- To support a child when attendance has been an issue, or they are being reintegrated back to school after a prolonged absence or part-time timetable.
- Monitor and report children missing from education.
- To work in partnership with other school staff or key agencies is attendance or punctuality is an issue.

**Parents**

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevents from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting school on each morning the child will be absent
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time.
- Making requests for leave in term time, only when absolutely necessary as these are rarely authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

**Definitions**

**Authorised absence**
Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons absent from school where a reason has been given, such as illness, medical appointment, or any other genuine exceptional circumstance or pastoral consideration. Only the school can deem the absence to be authorised and the parents, therefore not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

**Unauthorised absence**
Unauthorised absences are those which the school do not consider reasonable or for which no "leave" has been given. These are an offence by the parent and include:

- keeping children off school without a good reason
- truancy from a whole session
- absences which have never been properly explained or where the reason given is not one that the Local Authority would authorise
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- taking unauthorised holidays, or days off for family events

**Attendance Expectations for all pupils**

School expects a minimum attendance of 95% for each pupil. We do understand that extenuating circumstances can occur and would encourage you to liaise with us on circumstances that may prevent your child reaching this target.

The school day starts at 8.50am when doors will open for children to enter school. The school gates are open from 8.40am and we expect children and parents to enter the school site from this time to ensure they are prepared for their entry to the classroom.

Children arriving after 9.00am are late and will usually enter via the Main office of the school.

Registers officially close at 9.30am and any children entering after this time will receive an unauthorised mark unless a suitable reason is given.

Lateness, after registers close, contributes to overall attendance figures for your child and persistent lateness of this kind could incur further action from the Educational Legal Intervention team.

The school day finishes at 3.25pm for Key Stage 1 and 3.30pm for Key Stage 2. Parents can enter the playground from 3.20pm and should be present for the dismissal time of their child. If parents are persistently late in collecting their child then further action may be taken by the school.

Parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school time wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, staff should be informed (in advance if at all possible,). A copy of the Hospital appointment letter, or proof of an appointment at the Doctors or Dentist **must** be bought into School, in order for the School to authorise that absence. If this is not done then the absence may be coded as unauthorised. A "present" mark can still be awarded if the child attends for as much of the session as they can. It is always better to attend for some of the time, rather than missing the whole day.

**Procedures for reporting absence**

Every half-day session has to be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised. Information about the cause of each absence is always required.

A parent can provide a reason for an absence, but cannot authorise an absence.

Parents/Carers are required to telephone the School, or pop into the Main Office, on each day of an absence before 9.30am, to explain that day's absence. School has a dedicated absence line for reporting absence and messages are checked daily.

If no reason for absence has been received then a text message will be sent requesting the parent to notify school of why their child is absent. If parents do not make contact and the child has not arrived at school, a member of school staff will telephone parents during the afternoon of that day. If the School are unable to establish a reason for an absence, it will then be coded as unauthorised. It is parent's responsibility to notify school of the reason for absence if they wish for it to be coded appropriately. School reserve the right to code the absence as unauthorised if the reason given is not satisfactory.

***How does your child compare?***

| Attendance during one School Year | Equals this many days absent | Equals this many weeks absent | Which means this many lessons missed |
|---|---|---|---|
| **90%** | **19** | **4** | **100** |
| **80%** | **38** | **8** | **200** |
| **70%** | **57** | **11.5** | **290** |

Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning opportunities and could seriously disadvantage your child's future prospects, both academically and socially.

**Attendance concerns**

School work in conjunction with the Education Legal Intervention Team (ELIT) – a dedicated attendance team in the Local Authority. Where attendance is an ongoing concern for a child or there has been considerable leave in term time taken, school may refer the case to ELIT for further intervention in the form of fixed penalty notices or legal action.

**We work together with parents to improve attendance**

**Expect**

We aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across our school.

**Monitor**

We rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

**Listen and understand**

When a pattern is spotted, we discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

**Facilitate support**

We remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an Early Help or a whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

**Formalise support**

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, we work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances, this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

**Enforce**

Where all other avenues have been exhausted, and support is not working or not being engaged with, we enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

**Below are the steps school may take where a child's attendance is below 95%:**

- Stage 1 attendance concern letter sent to parents, highlighting the child current attendance figure and requesting support from parents to ensure the child attends every day that they are able.
- Parent meeting with Attendance Leader and other members of staff deemed appropriate to the situation.
- Medical evidence letter/School nurse referral – outlining the need for medical evidence to be provided by the parent for the absence to be authorised, where absence is reported as illness.
- Offer of Early Help where wider issues beyond school attendance are identified
- School Attendance Review Meetings (SARM) to discuss ongoing attendance issues and begin the formal FAST Track process with the ELIT team.
- Referral to ELIT team for fixed penalty notices or legal action (as deemed appropriate by the ELIT team)

The school has a legal responsibility to reduce the number of children whose attendance falls below 90%. These are called "persistent absentees". Special procedures may be applied to children at risk of falling into this category.

**Leave in Term Time**

Where parents wish to take their child out of school for leave in term time, e.g. holidays, then this must be formally requested in writing. The official form for this request is available from the school office and must be submitted to school before the leave commences. There are very few

acceptable reasons for this leave to be authorised and authorisation of this leave is at the Headteacher's discretion.

The Leave in Term Time Penalty process allows the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice to parents for removing their child from school for an unauthorised leave of absence in term time. This is different to the Fast Track process.

Where a child has unauthorised term time leave but does not meet the criteria for 'Fast Track', schools can use the 'Leave in Term Time (Penalty Notice) Process'.

If the Leave in Term Time (Penalty Notice) Process is followed, parents may be issued with a penalty notice for taking their child on 10 sessions (5 school days) unauthorised leave in term time with no previous unauthorised absence. This leave could be taken at any point in the last 12 calendar months to contribute towards the 10 sessions.

Parents may also be issued with a penalty notice for taking their children out of school for a week of unauthorised leave as long as there are at least 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence over the previous 12 calendar months.

For pupils who have taken unauthorised leave in term time for four weeks or more, penalty notices may not be issued as cases may proceed straight to court. Decisions as to whether a penalty notice is to be issued or the matter proceeds straight to court lie with the Education Legal Intervention Team. The Headteacher cannot make this decision.

Where children do not attend school, but unauthorised leave in term time is suspected (parents have not followed the application process) the usual school absence procedures must be followed. Schools must then follow the Children Missing in Education procedures, for safeguarding purposes, jointly with the Local Authority making reasonable enquiries to try to locate the pupil

**Data analysis & Attendance reward initiatives**

The attendance leader and other key staff will analyse data at regular intervals during the school year. This allows us to identify and monitor persistent absentees (attendance below 90%) and move forward with the processes outlined above.

Attendance data is also collected each week and termly to ascertain winning classes of the weekly awards and termly certificates for pupils.

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

Wylde Green Primary endeavour to continue to improve overall attendance year on year.

Attendance Awards are given every term to children with good attendance together with good punctuality. These awards are presented in a special assembly.

From time to time, the school will offer further rewards and incentives to encourage good attendance for all children or targeted groups.

Each term the following will be awarded:

- 100% Attendance for a term which may include up to two lates will be awarded with a certificate.

- 98.50% to 99.99% will receive a Gold sticker
- 98.59% to 97.00% will receive a Silver sticker
- 96.99% to 95.60% will receive a Bronze sticker

At the end of each academic year children that have achieved 100% attendance for the year will also receive a certificate and will be entered into a prize draw.

**The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Mr Richard Hamilton-Martin | DHT/Attendance Leader |
| Mr Shahadat Hussain | Assistant SENDCO |
| Mrs Rebecca Ellis | Attendance Officer |

**Summary**
The school has a legal duty to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. School staff are committed to working closely with parents/carers as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

**The School strive to maximise all learning opportunities and academic, social and emotional outcomes for all children, by encouraging good attendance and punctuality.**

Date approved by Governing Body:
To be reviewed: