

# West Haddon Endowed School

## Policy Document

### ATTENDANCE Policy

‘Where Happiness Promotes Success’

## OUR SCHOOL VISION

To ensure every child leaves our school with an outstanding education and the values and character to live life in its fullness, contributing positively to society.

Jesus said: I have come in order that you might have life-and life in all its fullness. John 10:10

### **Mission Statement**

West Haddon Endowed C. of E. Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential; success for all. Attendance is important at school because:

- Education provides a means of advancement for all young people to improve their life chances.
- Regular school attendance is a legal requirement for those registered at a school. Without it the efforts of the best teachers and schools will come to nothing.
- Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.
- Irregular attendance undermines that educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. It places children at risk and in some cases it can result in pupils being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.

Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. At West Haddon Primary School we aim to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carer and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality.

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The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels valued and secure.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives West Haddon will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

### **Aims**

School attendance is subject to various Education laws, including The Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 and this attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance targets. These will reflect both national and Northamptonshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

1. To improve the overall attendance percentage of pupils at school
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
3. To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
4. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
5. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
6. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
7. To implement a system of rewards and sanctions.
8. To promote effective partnerships with the Education Social Work Service and with other services and agencies.
9. To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

### **Review and monitoring**

This policy and procedures will be reviewed in line with the POLICY Review Timetable. Attendance is reported to the full Governing Body each full term in the Headteachers report.

## **School Procedures**

### **Registers**

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.55am. The registers will remain open for a further 10 minutes so if a child arrives between 8.55am and 9.05am they will be marked with an 'L' indicating a late mark. Any pupil arriving after 9.05am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation. E.g. transport delayed.

The afternoon registration will take place at 1.00pm for Reception and Key Stage 1 and 1.30pm for Key Stage 2. Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close.

If a child is likely to be late, e.g. has a dental appointment, parents should inform the class teacher in advance. Continued and persistent lateness will be recorded and monitored and then discussed with the Headteacher to try and find a solution to the problem.

Any pupil who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence.

If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

### **Illness**

If a child is absent due to illness, parents are asked to telephone or email the school as soon as possible. If a child is likely to be away for longer than 3 days, parents are asked to ensure we have regular progress reports, so that we can send work home if necessary.

### **First Day Absence**

When a child is away from school and parents/carers are expected to notify the school of the reason for absence. We ask that parents telephone the school office by 9.00am if their child will be absent from school that day. Where they have not notified the school of the absence then the office staff will instigate a telephone call to ascertain the reasons and remind parents of their responsibility to inform the school, this will be done usually by 9.30am. If contact cannot be made with parents a home visit will be carried out by two members of staff by 11.00am.

### **Third Day Absence**

If after three days of using the above system no contact has been established the Headteacher will send out a standard letter using first class mail.

### **Ten Day's Absence**

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive day's will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Education Entitlement Team. This will include details of action that has already been instigated.

### **Persistent Absence**

Persistent Absence (PA) is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if his/her attendance is less than 90% (regardless whether or not the absences have been authorised). If a child's absence falls below 90% the parent/guardian will receive a letter from the school informing them of this. It is the responsibility of the class teacher and office staff to be aware of and bring attention to the Headteacher of any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents. If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to the school Health Adviser if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases the school will seek advice from the Education Entitlement Team. (Appendix 2)

### **School Refusal**

If you are finding it difficult to get your child to attend school, you can ask the Local Authority and school to help you. You can agree a plan to help improve your child's attendance which can result in drawing up a "Parenting Contract". This is a voluntary agreement between you and the Local Authority or school governing body to encourage school attendance. The agreement is not legally binding as such but can be used as evidence if the Local Authority later decides to prosecute. The Local Authority or governing body should fund any support needed to implement the Parenting Contract e.g. a requirement to attend parenting classes.

Schools also have a safeguarding duty, under section 175 Education Act 2002, to investigate any unexplained absences. This could take the form of a telephone conversation and/or home visit. Each family circumstance is different and we will use our professional experience to support, advise and plan away forward.

### **Frequent Medical Absences**

The school will discuss with the School Health Advisor those pupils who frequently miss days on medical grounds.

### **A Welcome Back**

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome by their class teacher. Where appropriate this should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

### **Promoting attendance**

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive education. It is every member of staff's duty to promote good attendance through the following methods:-

- 1 Induction Material
- 2 Letters
- 3 Assemblies

### **Holidays in term time**

Regular school attendance is vital to a child's education and parents have a legal obligation to ensure their child attends school. Dates of school holidays and

training days are regularly given out and copies are available from the school office.

Parents should avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. The Department for Education guidelines which the Headteacher must follow, affecting children being away from school, are quite precise and they limit time for children to be absent from school in term. The Headteacher is not able, by Law, to grant time away from school except in certain circumstances. In such **exceptional instances**, the Headteacher may authorise an absence after receiving a written request outlining the reasons for a child's absence during term time. The Headteacher will need to meet with parents on such occasions to discuss the issue. Where a child's attendance falls below 90%, all requests will be denied. Absences without the Headteacher's permission, in advance, are classed as truancy and have to be recorded on the child's school record as 'unauthorised absence'.

### **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

The following are classified as authorised absence from school:

- ✓ Sickness – children with persistent illness will require a doctor's note confirming the illness
- ✓ Emergency medical appointments
- ✓ Days off for specific religious observance
- ✓ School closures due to unforeseen circumstances

Other authorised absence in exceptional circumstances (at the discretion of the Headteacher):

- ✓ Specialist medical appointments
- ✓ Family bereavement
- ✓ Compassionate grounds
- ✓ Family crisis
- ✓ Examinations off site

All requests for absence due to exceptional circumstances must be placed in writing or emailed prior to the event. The request will be considered and parents will be informed of the outcome by letter.

The following are classified as unauthorised absence:

- ✓ Routine dental and optical check-ups.
- ✓ Family holiday
- ✓ Family day trips
- ✓ Leaving early for an event
- ✓ Lateness after the register is closed at 9.05am for the morning session and 1.10pm for KS1 and 1.25pm for KS2 for the afternoon session.

Pupils with more than 5 sessions of unauthorised absence will receive a letter reminding parents of the statutory duties to ensure that their pupil/s attends school regularly and on time. Parents with 10 sessions or more of unauthorised absences will be informed that the school will be contacting the Education Entitlement Team at the Local Authority. It is then the LA who make the decision to take further action. Usually the Local Authority will take one or more of the following actions:

- ✓ Write a formal letter warning parents of their statutory duties
- ✓ Issue a fixed penalty notice (usually £60 per child per parent)

- ✓ Take court proceedings to prosecute parents who fail to secure their child's/children's regular attendance under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act

**Persistent lateness**

Persistent lateness is determined by receiving 5 or more late marks within the register in any half term.

**Attendance Targets**

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be used and the Headteacher will be responsible for overseeing this work. The school expects to achieve and maintain attendance of at least 96%.

**The registration system**

The school will use a computerised system for keeping the school attendance records.

The registers will be taken electronically and backed up daily.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### **The Law**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable

- (a) To his age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) To any special needs he may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping. The legal requirements are found in:  
*The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006*

#### **Categorisation of Absence**

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

##### 1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

##### 2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

##### 3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration

## Appendix 2

### Levels of escalation

1	First Day Absence	Truancy Call Instigated
2	Several Short Term Absence that are cause for concern or long term absence	First letter sent home, to arrange for parent to discuss with class teacher.
3	Continued absence pattern	Second letter sent home to arrange for parent to discuss with class teacher and headteacher. To produce action plan or referral to appropriate support agency.
4	Continued concern	Referral made to EWO
5	Continued concern	Action taken by EWO may include Fast Track, Fixed Penalty Notice, Home Visits, Meeting in School, Warning Letter
6	Continued concern	Legal Action