

Wallace Fields Infant School and Nursery



Attendance Policy

Wallace Fields Infant School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Reviewed: January 2019

Next Review: September 2020



Document ID/Name	Attendance Policy
Date	16 th November 2015
Document Location	P:\Policies\WFIS Master Policies\Attendance Policy.docx
Version	8
Author	Ceri Jewell
Next Review Date	September 2020

Document History

Date	Version	Amended By	Comment (e.g. reason for version change)
16/11/15	1	Ceri Jewell	Annual policy review
22/09/2016	2	Ceri Jewell	DRAFT-waiting for EWO changes
09/11/16	3	Ceri Jewell	Inserted advice on Medical/Dental Checks and inserted attendance targets
9/11/16	3	Nicky Mann	Final proof read
7/04/17	4	Collette Pasley	Added Attendance letters details
24/04/17	5	Nicky Mann	Reviewed
02/10/2017	6	Collette Pasley	Updates as discussed with EWO
14/09/2018	7	Collette Pasley	Updated to reflect dates for Academic Year 2018-2019 / Spoke to EWO and they confirmed our policy and grant for leave of absence does not require any further updates
23/01/2019	8	Nicky Mann	Updated with commitment to attendance Added in Appendix 1 (Every School Day Counts)

This document is a statement of the philosophy and strategies for Attendance at Wallace Fields Infant School which has been developed from that adopted by the Epsom and Ewell Partnership of Schools (1). All schools in the Partnership are committed to developing and implementing a consistent and transparent set of joint standards and approaches which improve and maintain attendance in local schools. Educational Welfare Officers (EWO's), attached to local schools, help monitor and improve attendance by supporting families who are causing concern.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

All holiday requests will be considered to be unauthorised leave of absence. Any appeal will be heard by the Governing Board, whose decision will be final. All other requests for leave will be considered on a case by case basis by the Governing Board that may, at its' discretion, delegate some decisions to the Headteacher. Again, the decision of the Governing Board will be final.

Wallace Fields Infant School, along with other local schools and Surrey County Council, firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Full and regular attendance at school is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. Pupils will be expected to achieve 100% attendance but when absence is unavoidable, parents/carers will be required to inform the School at the earliest opportunity.

The schools targets for the 2018-2019 Academic Year are:

Academic Year 2018 / 2019
Whole School: 97%
Persistent Absence 3%

Parents/carers, whose children are of compulsory school age (5 to 16) and are registered at a school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they do not do so they may be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or to be served with a penalty notice.

In line with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, all unexplained absences of 10 consecutive days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority, although schools may wish to discuss such an absence sooner with their EWO if the absence is unauthorised, parents/carers cannot be contacted or there are other concerns. Schools are required to report all absence figures to the local authority and the DFE and to ensure they are recorded on a child's annual report. Rates of absence are also taken into account by OfSTED as part of a school's inspection.

COMMITMENT TO ATTENDANCE

The staff at Wallace Fields Infant School are committed, in partnership with the parents/carers, students, governors and the Local Authority, to building a school which serves the community and of which the community is proud.

Regular attendance is key to achieving the five outcomes of Every Child Matters: staying healthy, enjoying and achieving, keeping safe, contributing to the community, and social and economic well-being. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. We are committed to encouraging and supporting parents/carers in ensuring their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

Encouraging Regular Attendance

The majority of children attend school on time regularly, the benefits of this can be seen in their academic progress and healthy relationships they enjoy with their peers and staff. With this in mind the School is proactive in encouraging good attendance using the following strategies:

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- by responding promptly to a child or parents/carers concerns about the school or other pupils
- by accurate and punctual completion of registers during morning and afternoon registration
- by providing parents with termly attendance data for their child and an annual summary with their annual report
- ensuring all staff take a proactive approach to promoting good attendance and apply this policy consistently and equitably

Letters will be sent out to:

- highlight any attendance under 97% unless valid medical documentation has been provided
- highlight any attendance under 95%
- highlight any attendance under 90% consistently, will receive a letter which will be followed up with a meeting with Mrs Katie Muir (Inclusion Lead)
- An attendance certificate will be awarded to all pupils with 97% attendance and above.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITY AND THE LAW

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent/carer 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/carer 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.

REGISTERS

Under the provision of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the Student Registration Regulations 1995 the School must keep an attendance register.

Any child 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.

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

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

- Parents/carers keeping children off School unnecessarily

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Excessive illness without medical evidence

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

REGISTRATION & LATENESS

The School day begins at 8.50 a.m. for children ready to start learning at 9.00 a.m. Classroom staff are responsible for keeping an accurate register of attendance at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon session. The school office monitors the children's attendance and where necessary will contact the parent/carer in relation to any unexplained absence.

Morning registration will take place from 8.50 a.m. – 9.00 a.m. Any child who arrives after the register has been taken will be marked late "L".

Any child, who arrives after 9.00 a.m. must report to the school office. Pupils arriving after 9.30 a.m. when the registers have been officially closed for the day will be marked as "U", which statistically counts as an unauthorised absence. If a reason is given for the late arrival, for example, attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered. For an authorised code to be used in this context, prior notice must have been received by the School. Any circumstances where prior notice has not been received by the School will automatically be treated as unauthorised.

Afternoon registration will be taken at 1.30 p.m.

In cases of persistent late arrival to school, parents will initially be spoken to by the class teacher or ultimately be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher.

ESCALATION PROCESS

If a child is absent for any reason, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the School by 9.30 a.m. However, if the child is absent and no reason has been provided the following procedure will apply:

1. First Day Absence

If a child is absent parents/carers are asked to telephone the absence line before 9 a.m. and no later than 9.30 a.m. and leave a message with the reason for absence. If a message is not received by 9.30 am the school will telephone the parent/carer to request a reason for absence. A message will be left if no contact is made. The school will note any reason for absence and will categorise it as authorised or unauthorised.

2. Second Day Absence

The school will telephone the parent/carer to request a reason for absence. The school will note any reason given for absence and will categorise it as authorised or unauthorised. A message will be left where no contact can be made.

3. Third Day Absence

The school will telephone the parent to request a reason for absence. The school will note any reason given for absence and will categorise it as authorised or unauthorised. If no response is received the school will send a letter to the parent/carer and the EWO will be informed.

4. Ten Days Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will automatically be notified to the Local Authority (if this has not already happened), by submitting a referral to Education Welfare; this is a legal requirement. As part of this referral the school will include details of the action that they have taken. For a child on the 'At Risk' Register or defined as a 'Child in Need', contact with social care and/or Education Welfare will be made at an earlier stage.

5. Frequent Absence

Whilst at some point most children will be off school due to illness, regular absenteeism can disguise a reluctance to attend school. All problems relating to irregular attendance are best sorted out between the School and home. If a child is reluctant to attend School, it is unhelpful for families to cover up their absence or give in to pressure to excuse them from attending; this gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes returning to School more difficult.

The Education Welfare Officer meets with school staff on a regular basis to discuss any attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s by:

1. A phone call to the parent/carer by Class Teacher and issues discussed with student within school
2. A letter sent to the parent/carers stating concerns
3. Meeting at school with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

If this is unsuccessful the School will refer to the Education Welfare Officer.

PERSISTENT ABSENCE (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason (ie their attendance is 90% or below). Absence at this level is considerably damaging to a child's educational prospects and the School requires parents' full support and co-operation in addressing this.

The School monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the Persistent Absence mark, or is at risk of moving towards that mark, is given priority and the parent/carer will be informed of this immediately.

Parents will be notified by letter if their child becomes a persistent absentee and be invited to a meeting where an action plan will be drawn up to address the issues identified.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

If you arrive late after close of register 'U' mark and have other unauthorised absences 'O' code over a period of time which brings your attendance below 87% a referral may be made to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

COMMITMENT TO ATTENDANCE

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Poor attendance can:

- mean that a pupil falls behind in their work
- affect their motivation
- affect their enjoyment of learning
- lead to poor behaviour
- affect their desire to attend school regularly
- affect their confidence in school

What attendance means?

100%: No Absence or lateness

Outstanding Attendance

Children will be awarded an individual certificate for each term of 100% attendance and if they receive a certificate for Autumn Term, Spring Term and Summer Term, then they qualify for an attendance certificate from our Head Teachers, Miss Nicky Mann and Mr Hallums.

97% or above: Less than 6 days absence a year

Excellent Attendance

95% to 97%: 10 days absence a year

Good Attendance

We appreciate some infant illnesses e.g. chickenpox, tonsillitis, will lead to children having time off and these absences will be marked accordingly.

91% to 94%

Needs to improve

Will receive a letter and attendance leaflet

86% - 90%: 19 days absence a year

Cause for Concern

Children in this group are missing at least a month of school per year. This would be regarded as persistent absentee and Parents / Carers will be asked to come into school for a meeting to participate on developing an action plan to address this issue, and may be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

81% - 85%: 29 days absence a year

Children in this group are missing at least six weeks of school per year; equal to half a term.

Parents/Carers of children in this group will be called into school for a meeting and will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

80% or less: 38 days absence a year

Children in this group are missing a year of school over the five years and it will be almost impossible to keep up with work and will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

How do we reward attendance?

Monthly recognition in our newsletter for class with the highest attendance.

Termly individual attendance certificates for children with attendance at 100%

Medical & Absences: Please can we remind parents that we need to see confirmation of all medical appointments in advance, unless they are emergency ones, when an appointment card from the surgery should be asked for at the time. This helps us use the appropriate code in the registers and means that we will not need to call you on the day of your child's absence. If you have made an emergency appointment or your child is absent from school for any other reason, please leave a message on the Absence line (0208 394 0647) explaining why your child is absent, and whether or not they will return to school in time for lunch.

Ideally, all appointments should where possible take place outside of school hours.

EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. (The Headteacher/Governing Board will be responsible for deciding what they consider to 'exceptional circumstances'). There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. The Government, through the Department for Education (DFE), has stated in its guidance (July 2008) that "Schools must remember that they can only approve absence for family holidays if they consider that there are special reasons which warrant the holiday."

Any savings that parent/carers may believe are made by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. Research relating to this demonstrates;

- The link between a child's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.

School will only authorise leave of absence in term time in exceptional circumstances.

Where a parent/carer wishes to request a leave of absence, a formal request must be made, in writing, to the Headteacher who will consider the application on behalf of the Governors. As part of the consideration the Headteacher will decide if "exceptional circumstances" apply. Even in cases where "exceptional circumstances" do apply, authorisation will be considered within the context of the child's previous attendance. "Exceptional Circumstances" alone do not guarantee authorisation.

All absences, including holidays, taken without prior authorisation by the School will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, Education Welfare will be made aware through monitoring of attendance registers and in some circumstances parent/s may be liable to a Penalty Notice.

Dental and medical treatments

Whilst the school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance in writing, of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school. Evidence of the appointment may be requested.

If a child needs to attend an appointment during the school day parents are asked to sign their child in / out on the Pupil Signing In/Out register at reception.

Penalty Notices

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer in persistent cases of unauthorised absence from school requiring the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid between 21 days and 28 days.

If not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the absence by the Local Authority for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

- To parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officer.
- Where a child is taken out of School for unauthorised leave of absence in term time (5 days / 10 sessions or more within a three month period – this need not be consecutive) without the authority of the Headteacher, **each parent/carer** is liable to receive a penalty notice for each

child. In the case of separated parents, the penalty notice will be sent to the parent requesting leave of absence and / or taking the pupil out of school. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised.

- When pupils, identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols, and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

With the exception of unauthorised holidays taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

TRUANCY PATROL

When a family comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol, the child's pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences in the preceding 4 months, a warning letter may be sent to the parent/carers. If there are further unauthorised absences during the subsequent 15 school days, a Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent/carers.

The Penalty Notice fines are as follows:

- £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but before 28 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

THE EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER

Education Welfare monitors the attendance of all children on a regular basis. The Education Welfare Officer will work with school and parents to promote good attendance and investigate reasons for absence.

If attendance problems cannot be resolved by school then the school will make a referral to Education Welfare. The Education Welfare Officer will try to resolve the situation but if attempts to improve attendance have failed and unauthorised absence persists, the Education Welfare Officer can use sanctions such as parenting contracts, penalty notices and prosecution.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, could result upon conviction in a magistrate's court, to a fine not exceeding £2500 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or both.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff are expected to:

- Encourage good attendance and punctuality

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping a register of attendance and raise attendance concerns with the Headteacher

Office Staff

- Will ensure morning and afternoon registers are taken and are up to date
- Contact parents and request reasons for absence
- Collate daily attendance records and together with the Headteacher, put in place agreed procedures to monitor and respond to poor attendance and punctuality

Headteacher

- Regularly meet with Education Welfare Office (EWO) to identify and action any attendance concerns
- Work with families to resolve attendance issues
- Monitors and reviews the attendance policy on an annual basis

- Monitors and reviews the attendance procedures and works with the EWO to ensure reasons for absence are identified and interventions are put in place
- Identifies and monitors attendance of PA pupils
- Promotes the attendance policy within the school and ensures that it is implemented effectively

Governing Board

- Formulates the Policy
- Agrees appropriate absence targets on an annual basis
- Plays an active role in ensuring targets are met



Wallace Fields Infant School

EVERY
SCHOOL DAY
COUNTS

Going to school everyday is the single most important part of your child's education. Children learn new things at school every day – missing school puts them behind



What time should your child be at school?

Gates open at 8.40am each day. Where parents can come in to the school playground & wait with their child. Classroom doors open at 8.50am and all children should arrive for that time.

Please do not ask staff to re-open gates for you if you are just a little bit late – register close promptly at 9am so they must lock the gates promptly at this time. Any children arriving after the gates are locked need to be signed in to the main office by an adult.

What time does school finish?

Gates will be open at 3.00pm by our caretaker for parents to enter the school grounds to wait outside for the children to leave school at 3.15pm (3.30pm for Nursery) . Please collect your child promptly as the gates will be locked again at 3.40pm in order to ensure the school site is safe and secure for children attending KidsQuest and After School Clubs.

What about if my child attends a club?

Clubs will exit from the main school gate at 4.15pm or 4.30pm for Cookery Club. Please wait outside the main school gate to collect your child. The club leader will hand your child over to you.

08.50-9.00am **Doors Open & Registrations**

10.05am-10.25am **Assembly**

10.25am-10.45am **Morning Break**

12.30pm-1.30pm **Lunch Time**

15.15pm **Home Time**

What is good attendance?

If your child’s attendance is around 90% you may think that is pretty good? So what does 90% attendance look like?

90% attendance means your child is absent from school for the equivalent of one half day every week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

Over the year a 90% attendance rate means the child will have missed the equivalent of four weeks in school.

September								July

If the child continues to attend for only 90% of the time, in their 6 years in primary school they will miss more than half a year of education.

	Sept								July
Y1									
Y2									
Y3									
Y4									
Y5									
Y6									

What parents can do to help?



Ensure your child attends school every day and on time



If your child is not well enough to attend school contact the school on the first day of absence



Try to make dental and medical appointments outside of school time or at weekends



Always take family holidays during the school holiday.

Too poorly to attend?

Use good common sense when deciding whether your child needs to stay at home. Work on the basis that sick children belong at home and well children in school. Please remember that early morning aches and pains often pass, so don't keep your child at home 'just in case' when they could be learning in class.

Cough and Cold

A child may attend school with a minor cough or cold

Minor aches and pains

If your child has a persistent tooth or ear ache they need to see a doctor or dentist without delay. A child whose only complaint is a minor headache does not normally need to be kept at home.

Sickness and /or diahorrea

Children must stay at home for 48 hours from the last outburst.

Threadwork / Headlice

Children do not need to be kept off school, however, please treat them and then send them to school once treated.

Holidays in term time

The Government has made amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into force on 1st September 2013. These state that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence for holidays during the term time unless there are exceptional circumstances; in these cases it is the Head Teacher who determines the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

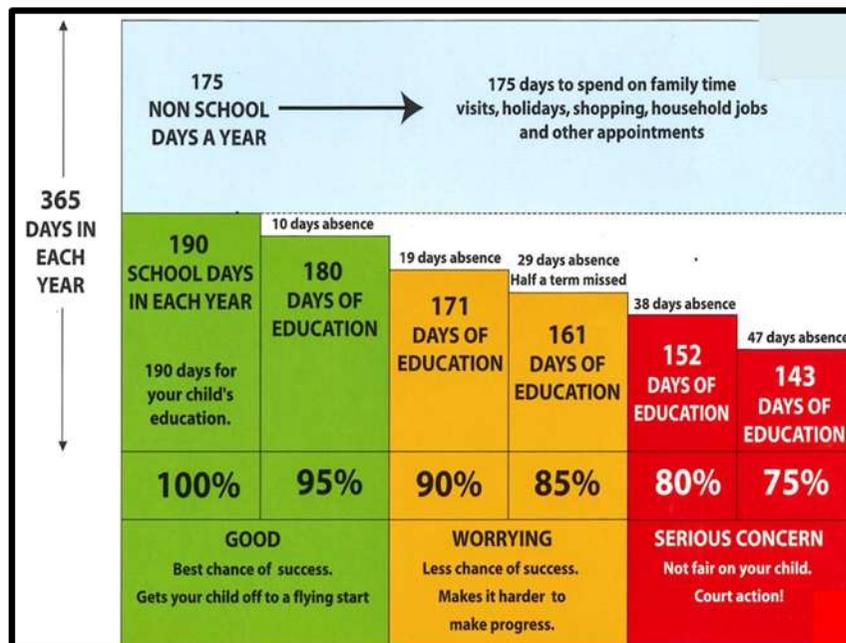
As a consequence of these changes the Head Teacher will be **unable** to approve requests for leave of absence for reasons that are **not** considered special or exceptional such as:

- ✓ Availability of cheap holidays and cheap travel arrangements
- ✓ Days overlapping with beginning or end of term

Parents needing leave of absence for exceptional circumstances should complete a form, which is available from the school office or via our website, at least two weeks before the anticipated start date. The reason for the request should be given in detail with a copy of any relevant back up documents. Applications should be made before the leave is arranged as absences will not be granted retrospectively.

Every School Day Counts

Days off school add up to lost learning!



How will I know what my child's attendance is?

Your child's class teacher will discuss your child's attendance at each of the parents evenings' during the school year. You will also get an attendance report in February (half way through the year) and at the end of the school year.

If your child's attendance drops below 96% you will receive a letter advising you that your child's attendance is being monitored. When attendance drops below 90% the Educational Welfare Officer will become involved and you will be required to attend a meeting. Parents of children with low attendance can be issued with fixed penalty notices. Please note you can also receive a fixed penalty notice if your child is persistently late too.

How do we promote good attendance at WFIS & Nursery

At WFIS & Nursery we do not give out lots of rewards for attendance as children can't help if they are ill. We also believe that most of our children are too young to be able to influence their attendance. Our Senior Leadership Team will work with, and support, families of children whose attendance falls below our expected percentage. If you need any support getting your child to school on time, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Katie Muir (Deputy Head Teacher) who will be more than happy to meet with you and discuss what we can do to help.

Weekly Rewards

Each week the class with the highest attendance is announced in our newsletter, the attendance mascot will be delivered to the winning class on Monday morning.

Termly Rewards

Each term children who have 100% attendance for that term will receive a certificate in assembly.

Yearly Rewards

At the end of the school year there will also be a 'most improved' award to someone in each year group who has seen a significant improvement in their attendance.

