

Wisewood Primary School



WISEWOOD
NURSERY & PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy 2025-2026

Author of Policy	Claire Austin
Date Policy ratified by Governors	12.5.2026
Date of Review	2.9.2026

Introduction

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. Parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's regular attendance and failure to do so is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Our Values

At Wisewood Primary School, we are committed to providing a full and enriching education for every pupil. We know that good attendance leads to children who are happy, confident and have strong peer relationships. We believe that regular school attendance is essential for academic achievement, personal development and future success. Pupils are expected to attend school every day and on time, if they are well enough to do so.

We actively encourage good attendance through clear procedures and strong partnerships with families. By working together, we aim to remove barriers and ensure every child feels supported and able to attend school regularly.

We believe that the most effective way to promote attendance is by fostering positive attitudes towards school. At Wisewood Primary School, we nurture a thriving community where everyone shows kindness and feels supported; feels shared responsibility for school attendance and are equipped with the tools to be resilient every day.

We also recognise that some pupils may be unable to attend due to ill health. In these cases, we are committed to providing the best possible support to help them stay connected to their school community and learning.

Regular attendance is vital for your child's future. Pupils who miss school frequently may fall behind in their learning and face challenges in future lessons or formal assessments. Good attendance also demonstrates reliability to future employers and may reduce the risk of involvement in antisocial behaviour. Research shows that children who attend school regularly are more likely to thrive socially, emotionally and academically.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether any absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Our Support First Approach

At Wisewood Primary School, our approach to attendance is driven by guidance from the Department for Education's 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' with a heavy emphasis on a support first approach. We ensure early, individualised and compassionate intervention, that considers a holistic view of the child, is implemented by our trained attendance and safeguarding team. We work with parents and carers as equal partners, building strong relationships and listening carefully to the barriers affecting attendance. We encourage open, supportive discussion to capture the voice of all parties including the child, parent/carer and school to identify both barriers and incentive factors to understand more about the challenges the pupil may be facing. We view attendance as an essential part of safeguarding, in line with the emphasis in statutory guidance that attendance is central to 'Keeping children safe in education'.

Our aims

Through this policy we aim to:

- **Enable Social Development:** Regular school attendance supports the development of social skills and helps students build and maintain friendships, contributing to emotional growth
- **Increase Confidence:** Being present and participating regularly in class boosts pupil's confidence in their abilities and encourages active participation in school life.
- **Create the Foundation for Lifelong Habits:** Regular attendance promotes discipline and commitment, establishing a foundation for lifelong habits of responsibility and punctuality.

- **Provide consistent Learning:** Excellent attendance allows pupils to fully engage with the curriculum, enhancing their understanding and academic progress.
- **Reduce Learning Gaps:** Regular school attendance reduces the risk of falling behind, ensuring that pupils do not miss out on key lessons and activities that could lead to learning gaps.
- **Enable strong Child-Adult Relationships:** Regular attendance at school allows students to build strong, trusting relationships with all staff members, which can positively impact their motivation and academic success.
- **Ensure all stakeholders have a clear understanding of our school tiered approach;** Universal provision in place for promoting excellent attendance, support for families where a pupil is at risk of persistent absence and the targeted support in place for families where attendance is causing a concern.

Definitions

Authorised absence	An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate unavoidable reason and the school has reviewed notification from a parent or carer.
Unauthorised absence	An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school even if the absence is supported by the parent.
Persistent absence (PA)	In England, a student is considered to be persistently absent when they have an attendance rate of 90% or below. This means they have missed 10% or more of their school sessions. This is considered to be a significant cause for concern.

Procedures

These procedures should be read in line with INOVA Academy Trust
Attendance Policy

Key Staff for Attendance

- Claire Austin –Head of School
- Zena Bingham – Learning Mentor
- Peter Roche – Educational Welfare Officer
- Michelle Kubon – Admin Officer

1st Day Absence and Calls

- All children are registered by 8.50 am when registers close
- Michelle Kubon will contact all the parents of all children who are absent from school where no prior reason has been provided. Priority will be given to children with safeguarding or child protection concerns. This must be completed by 9.30am.
- If parents cannot be reached, Michelle will contact Peter Roche (EWO) who may complete a safe and well visit to the family home. AStar Attendance will be updated.
- Peter Roche will also make a 'Safe and Well visits for any children who have been absent for 2 days or more. Other visits will be at the discretion of the DSL/DDSL.

Late Arrivals

- All parents of children arriving late must sign in on inventory and give the reason for being late.

Weekly Attendance

High 5 Club

- Zena Bingham will run a High 5 Club on Friday afternoons each week.
- The High 5 Club is for all Persistent Absentee (PA) children (Children whose attendance falls below 92%) who have attended school all week.
- The club is intended to be a reward for attendance and children will enjoy tea and biscuits and have opportunities to play board games.

- Parents of children who are classed as PA and do not attend school all week will be called by Zena Bingham to discuss reasons for their child's absence and how school may help them improve their child's attendance.
- If parents of PA children do not improve their child's attendance the following week, Jed Kenyon will contact them and invite them to an Attendance Improvement Meeting to discuss their child's poor attendance. Peter Roche will also attend this meeting and FIS involvement may be sought.

Weekly Attendance Assembly

- Attendance will be high profile in school and will form part of whole school assembly each Friday.
- All classes will display a sign in their classroom window of their weekly attendance.
- The class with the best attendance will receive a class reward

Weekly Inclusion Meeting

- A weekly Inclusions/Attendance meeting will take place on Monday morning and will be attended by Claire Austin, Zena Bingham and Sarah Wales.
- Discussion points at the meeting will include:
 - Pupils falling below 92%
 - Pupils who had poor attendance in the previous week
 - Attendance of groups – DA, SEND, EAL, All pupils.
 - Contact/communication with parents and next steps

Half Termly Attendance

School Attendance Panel (SAP) Meetings

A half termly SAP meeting will be attended by Claire Austin, Peter Roche, Zena Bingham and Michelle Kubon.

- Discussion points at the meeting will include:
 - Case load of EWO
 - Pupils falling below 92% and updates
 - Attendance of groups – DA, SEND, EAL, All pupils.
 - Contact/communication with parents and next steps
 - FIS involvement

EWO Assemblies and Lessons

- Claire Austin and Peter Roche will deliver an assembly on the importance of attendance and punctuality
- Attendance will be monitored and celebrated in assembly on Friday

Attendance Prizes

- The children with the attendance above 96% will receive a termly reward

Yearly Attendance

- All children whose attendance is 96% or above over the course of the academic year will be entered into the Attendance Prize Draw. There will be 3 prizes in the draw
- All children with 96% attendance or above will receive a certificate

Responsibilities

Attendance Champions	Claire Austin	Head of School/ DDSL
	Zena Bingham	Learning Mentor/ DSL
	Peter Roche	Educational Welfare Officer
	Sarah Wales	SENDCo

Class teachers are responsible for:

- The day-to-day attendance of pupils in their class.
- Being the first port of call for issues arising from attendance.
- Providing academic and emotional support to pupils who may be experiencing attendance challenges and identifying the root causes and addressing them proactively.
- Setting Expectations including communicating the importance of regular attendance for learning and academic progress.

- Monitoring the daily attendance of their pupils. They should maintain accurate attendance records, noting both present and absent students.
- Promoting punctuality - pupils to arrive at school on time each day. Punctuality is essential for a smooth start to the school day and minimise disruptions in the classroom.
- Taking Immediate Action: When a child is absent without prior notification or a valid reason, teachers should take immediate action. This may involve contacting the school's attendance officer or designated staff member to report the absence.
- Identifying Barriers: Teachers should be alert to potential barriers to attendance, such as bullying, health issues, or family problems. Identifying these barriers and reporting them to school staff can lead to effective interventions.
- Implementing School Policies: Teachers should adhere to and implement the school's attendance policies and procedures.
- Collaborating with other school staff, such as attendance officers, the attendance champion and administrators, is essential for addressing attendance concerns effectively. Teamwork ensures a coordinated approach to supporting students.
- Safeguarding: Teachers should be aware of safeguarding protocols and report any concerns related to a child's safety or well-being promptly to the appropriate school staff.
- Liaising with families in the first instance of any attendance concerns.
- Teachers should submit attendance data promptly to the school's administrative team. This information is used for reporting to local authorities and the Department for Education (DFE).
- Role Modelling: Teachers can serve as role models by demonstrating punctuality and a commitment to their own professional responsibilities.

Administration Staff are responsible for:

- Data Analysis: collect and analyse attendance data to identify trends and patterns. They use this information to pinpoint areas of concern, such as high levels of persistent absence, frequent lateness, or particular year groups or demographic groups with attendance challenges.
- Safeguarding: aware of safeguarding protocols and report any concerns related to a pupil's safety or well-being promptly to the appropriate school staff.
- Taking Immediate Action: When a pupil is absent without prior notification or a valid reason, Administration Staff should take immediate

action. This may involve contacting the school's attendance lead or designated staff member to report the absence.

- Implementing School Policies: Administration staff should adhere to and implement the school's attendance policies and procedures, including sending attendance letters to families.

The Head of School is responsible for:

- Promoting a Positive Culture: Senior staff actively promote a positive school culture where regular attendance is recognised, and pupils feel motivated to attend school regularly.
- Monitoring and Reporting: They monitor attendance data regularly, analysing trends and patterns. Senior leaders use this data to identify students at risk of poor attendance and to measure the impact of attendance
- Improvement Strategies and Setting Expectations: Senior leaders establish clear expectations for staff regarding attendance monitoring, recording, and intervention. They ensure that staff understand their roles in promoting regular attendance.
- Recognising Attendance: They may implement incentives and recognition programs to recognise pupils and reinforce a positive attendance culture.
- Enforcing Policies: Senior Leaders enforce attendance policies consistently and fairly, addressing unauthorised absences promptly. They communicate the consequences of poor attendance to students and parents.
- Safeguarding: The Headteacher is alert to safeguarding concerns related to attendance. They collaborate with designated safeguarding leads to address any child protection issues arising from attendance concerns.
- Reporting: The Head of School will regularly report on attendance to the Governing Body.

The Attendance Champions are responsible for:

- Developing and Implementing Attendance Policies: Attendance Champions work closely with school leadership and staff to develop and implement effective attendance policies and procedures.
- Early Intervention: Recognising that early intervention is crucial, Attendance Champions identify pupils at risk of poor attendance. They collaborate with teachers, parents, and support staff to address attendance issues as soon as they arise.

- **Supporting Families:** Attendance Champions work closely with parents and guardians to build positive relationships and engage them in improving their child's attendance. They may conduct home visits, organise meetings, and provide guidance on strategies to promote regular attendance.
- **Providing Resources:** Attendance Champions may connect families with resources and services that can help alleviate attendance-related challenges, such as housing support, counselling, or healthcare services.
- **Monitoring and Reporting:** Attendance Champions continuously monitor attendance records and report attendance data to school leadership, governing bodies, and local authorities as required. They ensure that accurate records are maintained.
- **Interventions and Incentives:** Attendance Champions design and implement interventions and incentives to motivate pupils to attend school.
- **Staff Training:** Attendance Champions provide training to school staff on effective attendance monitoring, reporting, and intervention strategies. They ensure that all staff members understand their roles in promoting attendance.
- **Legal Compliance:** Attendance Champions are knowledgeable about legal requirements related to attendance, including regulations governing authorised and unauthorised absences. They ensure the school complies with these regulations.
- **Safeguarding:** Attendance Champions are vigilant for safeguarding concerns to attendance. They recognise signs of neglect or abuse and report them to designated safeguarding officers or authorities as necessary. One of our Attendance Champion is also our Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- **Community Engagement:** Attendance Champions may collaborate with community organisations, social services, and local authorities to address attendance issues within the broader community context.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Attendance Champions regularly evaluate the effectiveness of attendance strategies and interventions. They adapt their approaches based on data and feedback to achieve sustained improvements in attendance rates.
- **Promoting a Positive School Culture:** Attendance Champions contribute to creating a school culture where attendance is valued, and students feel motivated and supported to attend regularly.

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring excellent attendance of their child at school.
- Communicating with School: Establish open lines of communication with our school. Inform the school office promptly if your child is going to be absent due to illness or other reasons. This helps the school keep accurate attendance records.
- Setting Expectations: Clearly communicate your expectations about attendance to your child. Emphasise the importance of attending school regularly and on time.
- Monitor Progress: Keep track of your child's progress and attendance. Be aware of any sudden changes in attendance patterns that may signal underlying issues.
- Seek Support if Needed: If your child is facing challenges that affect attendance, such as health issues or academic struggles, seek support from the school, healthcare professionals, or relevant agencies.
- Collaborate with the School: Work collaboratively with the school to address any attendance issues. Explore support services or interventions if necessary.

Registration

The school gates open at 8.40am. Learning starts as soon as the children enter their learning space. At 8:50am, the registers will be taken. All class registers must be completed by 9:00am.

Registers will be taken again in the afternoon at 1.00pm. A full day counts as 2 sessions. Each class teacher has the responsibility for marking the attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. All attendance records are documented using BromCom and follow the current Attendance codes (Appendix 1). Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved in line with the relevant retention schedule.

Lateness

Pupils who are persistently late after the close of registers soon fall behind with their learning.

Any pupil who comes into school after 9:00am will be marked as late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Any pupil who arrives at school later than 9:20 am will be marked as late after close of register (Attendance code U). This is an unauthorised absence for the whole session and will affect your child's overall attendance percentage and can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal decision making.

As a school, we regularly monitor persistent lateness and will support and communicate with parents/carers to address this.

First Day Contact Process

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any contact from the parent/carer, we initiate a first day contact process. We have a duty of care to all children that attend our school to ensure their safety and well-being.

Office staff check all registers each morning to identify those pupils who are absent without explanation and, as a safeguarding requirement, make contact with the parents of these children by text or by telephone. If we cannot get hold of you via text message or phone, a home visit may be conducted. This is to fulfil our statutory safeguarding duty of care.

Where necessary, the Head of School may use their discretion and advise that communication is attempted outside the allotted times.

Graduated Response to no contact regarding absence	
1. Telephone Call to Primary Parent/Carers	If no contact is made by 9.30am as a result of the initial message, school will make a phone call to the primary parent/carers of the pupil.
2. Telephone Call to all other listed contacts	If no contact is made by 10.00am, school will call all listed contacts of the pupil.
3. Safe and Well Home Visit	If contact has still not been made by 12.30pm, the office will inform all DSL's and SLT, and a home visit will be conducted. If no contact can be made from a home visit, a home visit letter will be left at the house requesting contact as soon as possible (Appendix 2).
4. Escalation to External Agencies	If your child is still unaccounted for by the end of the school day, Social Care will be contacted for advice and to request a safe and wellbeing check. If the pupil has a social worker, they will be informed that the pupil has not been in school today and that they have not been seen when a home visit was carried out. The police will also be contacted if required.
If the absence continues into subsequent days, school will do all they can to achieve contact with the parent/carer each day and continue to follow professional advice.	
5. Final Escalation to Children Missing Education	On day 10 of no contact, school will contact Children Missing Education.

Medical Absence Procedure

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be brought to school before the appointment or be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- Proof of appointments should be provided to the school office prior to or straight after the appointment to ensure that it is marked as a medical absence.

Applications for Leave of Absence in Term Time

In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers **must not** give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for term time leave should be made on a Leave of Absence Request form (Appendix 3, available from the school office) and handed in as early as possible, but a minimum of two school weeks before the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation before your child can be absent from school.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. (Attendance code G).

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 96 %.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents/carers to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance, parents/carers are always informed of our concerns.

National framework for penalty notices

The new National threshold for consideration of legal action is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, including lates after close of register (Attendance code U) and unauthorised leave in term time (Attendance code G / O). If your child's absence falls into this category, the school will decide if further offers of support is likely to improve the situation or if a request for legal action should be submitted to the Local Authority.

The new costs and process is outlined below:

- **CONTROLLED First Offence** - The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.
- **Second Offence (within 3 years)** -The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.
- **Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)** - The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court.

Term time holidays

Pupils should not be taken out of school during term time unless it is unavoidable. Schools are required to consider requests for leave of absence in term time and should only approve the leave if there are exceptional circumstances. If a request for leave is denied and the pupil is absent for 5 days (10 sessions) or more then the school is expected to refer the case to the Local Authority (LA). The LA will issue a penalty notice with no requirement for a formal warning to be issued.

Penalty notices can also be issued where a pupil is absent for repeated incidents of unauthorised leave in term time that fall below the 5-day threshold. In every case, the request for the Penalty Notice comes in from the school to the LA for the process to be completed.

If you decide that you wish to take your child for an unagreed leave of absence, please complete a form informing us of this. This means that we will not need to undertake daily phone calls to you, or your contacts, conduct home visits, or refer to external agencies as we will know where your child is.

School Refusal / Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA)

The school recognises that some pupils may experience school refusal or Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) and is committed to responding with supportive and compassionate measures. Where concerns arise, the Children and Family Support Worker, alongside members of the Senior Leadership Team will meet with parents/carers to explore any push and pull factors impacting attendance and to collaboratively develop an Attendance Support Plan that is in the child's best interests.

The school will then work in partnership with families to provide appropriate support, which may include:

- Home visits
- Nurture-based provision
- Referrals to relevant external agencies where necessary

Changing Schools

All in-year transfers are managed by the Local Authority, however it is very important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they also inform Wisewood Primary as soon as possible.

A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and confirmed by all parties:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next.
- The address of the new school.
- A new home address if appropriate.

The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school within 5 working days.