



Wistaston Church Lane Academy

Pupil Attendance & Registration Policy

To be reviewed: September 2021

Policy History

December 2020	Amendment to granting authorised leave of absence, figures added regarding attendance letters Information regarding coronavirus-related absences Amended reference to Cheshire East EWO as we now use the services of a contractor	James Bancroft (Principal)
November 2019	Referenced Arbor, rather than SIMS. Times amended for L and U in the register	James Bancroft (Principal)
March 2017	Policy written	James Bancroft (Acting Head)

This policy was reviewed at the Spring 1 2021 Local Advisory Board Meeting.



Pupil Attendance & Registration Policy

Rationale

Ensuring that their children attend school every day is one of the most important things parents can do to help them succeed at school. There are clear links between regular attendance and achievement at school. All pupils should be aiming for excellent attendance and it is a parents' legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school.

This policy is based on DfE legislation and on guidance from the Education Welfare Service at Cheshire East Council.

Parents/carers will be advised of our policy on attendance

- When their children first start at our school
- Through newsletters
- At parents/carers evenings where necessary
- On the school website

Children or young people will be advised of our policy on attendance

- In assemblies
- In the classroom
- Through appropriate areas of the curriculum

Safeguarding and Registration

Where a parent notifies the school that a pupil will live at another address, the school will record the following:

- The full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live
- The new address
- The date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address

Where a parent of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in future, the school will record:

- The name of the new school
- The date on which the pupil first attended or is due to start attending that school

Emergency contact details

- The school will obtain at least two emergency contacts for every child.

Parental responsibility

- The school will obtain details of the parental responsibility for children.
www.gov.uk/government/publications/dealing-with-issues-relating-to-parental-responsibility/understanding-an-d-dealing-with-issues-relating-to-parental-responsibility - see our Parental Responsibility Policy

Removal from register

Pupils will only be removed from the register according to the legislation in Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Daily Registration and Punctuality

Although we understand that occasionally things can go wrong which cause late registration, it is important that children are in school on time each day. Fifteen minutes late each day in a half-term would add up to missing a day off school.

- The school's Official Register is stored on our data management information system, Arbor. Registers will either be updated using Arbor or on a paper copy. Registers provide the twice daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are legal documents that may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school.
- It is expected that parents or carers will provide an explanation if their child is absent. This should be received on the first day the absence occurs, at the start of the school day and, where possible, give some indication as to when the child is expected to return.



- Members of staff take class registers at the start of every morning and afternoon session, by 9.05 am and 1.20 pm respectively. Registers are brought to the office and checked by the administration staff.
- Pupils arriving at school between 9.05am and 9.15am in the morning, or between 1pm and 1.20pm in the afternoon are recorded as being late (L).
- Pupils arriving after 9.15am in the morning, or after 1.20pm in the afternoon, are recorded with a U (late after registration closed).
- Absences and missing marks are checked and followed up by administration staff - initial checks for absent children are made in the classroom, and sometimes by asking an older sibling. Sometimes a text is sent to a parent if we have received no contact. If a pupil is not present and no message has been received from the parents, initial checks will commence at 9.30 am.
- Administration staff keep a record of the steps they have taken to locate absent children – this includes pupil names, year group, classroom checks, checks with siblings, timings of phone calls, reasons for absence and if any further action is required. The staff will contact the priority 1 phone number first, followed by priority 2, followed by work phone numbers. Should we feel it is necessary the school will contact the police.
- If nothing is heard from parents regarding the absence by the second day we will arrange for a home visit. If we don't make contact, we will contact the police.
- The school staff use the DfE codes and guidelines for entries and absences. You can read more about this at www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/564599/school_attendance.pdf
- The Principal checks the data print out against the registers regularly.
- The registers and data base are checked by Education Welfare on an annual register check and if there are any children whose attendance is causing concern then this may be followed up by a visit from them
- A print out of the official register is made termly and submitted to the DfE as part of the School Census, a copy of which is kept on file.
- The School governors check the school procedures for Registration annually.

Illness

We understand that, on occasions, pupils may have to miss school due to ill health. We ask parents that they:

1. Adopt a bracing approach to illness. Please only keep pupils off school when it is absolutely necessary.
2. Contact school by phone on 01270663619 or 01270567769 on the first day of absence by 9.05am, indicating the reason for the child's absence and the expected date of return.
3. In cases of persistent or prolonged absence, school may require medical evidence, e.g. doctor's note, to explain the absence. This is monitored by the Education Welfare Officer.

Medical Appointments

Medical/dental appointments should be made out of school hours to prevent disruption to learning. Where this is not possible, please contact the school office with the appropriate evidence, e.g. letter/appointment card. If pupils are in school for registration they are recorded in the register as being present. If a pupil attends an appointment and then arrives in school after registers are closed, the absence is recorded as M (medical appointment) and is therefore an authorised absence. This is in line with Government guidelines at

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/564599/school_attendance.pdf.

Absences in relation to COVID-19

Attendance records will continue to be monitored throughout the pandemic.

COVID-19 will have an impact on attendance for pupils who may have to isolate for the following reasons:

- A member of their household develops symptoms and is either awaiting a test result and returns to school following a negative results.
- A member of their household has a positive test result and therefore the child needs to isolate according to the government guidance.
- Someone in their class/bubble has tested positive and the whole class/bubble has to isolate.



- A child has a positive test and isolates for ten days

COVID-19-related absence is usually recorded with an X on the register each day. However, if a child tests positive this is recorded with an I on the register (ill).

All schools are also required to report attendance to the DfE on a daily basis.

COVID-19-related absence using the code X does not affect a child's overall attendance percentage for the year. However, if a pupil is persistently absent due to repeated period of isolation, the family may be offered support from school or our Education Welfare Officer.

For further information please read:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year



Holidays from school

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school or the alternative provision on a regular basis. The Education Act 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a parent to "fail to secure their child's regular attendance at the school." Amendments to the regulations remove any reference to family holidays, extended leave and the statutory threshold of ten school days. Parents are not entitled to take a child out of school for a family holiday.

The amendments make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence (holiday) during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Principal will assess each request on an individual basis considering both the impact of missing school and any exceptional circumstances of which you describe. The school will also take into account:

- The pupil's age and the stage in their education
- The timing of the request and length of absence
- The overall attendance of the pupil (pupils with less than 95% will not usually be granted leave of absence)
- The progress of the pupil

The Principal and Governing Body determine that exceptional circumstances include:

- Services leave
- Holiday dates restricted by employer
- Family crisis (These are one off events which are unavoidable and necessary: these may include: Looked After Child, adoption, bereavement, housing crisis which prevents attendance, severe medical needs within the family) – *these occasions will usually be recorded with 'C' in the register, meaning 'other authorised circumstance'. Sometimes proof may be requested.*
- Religious observation – recorded as 'R' in the register
- Attendance at a funeral – *recorded as 'C' in the register*
- Any other 'exceptional circumstance' at the discretion of the Principal. Evidence should be supplied.

Examples of occasions which do not fall into an exceptional circumstance include:

- Family holidays within a term
- Family holidays attached to a school holiday at any time of the year
- Birthday treats
- Days out with family members
- 'Trips of a lifetime'

Other examples of common absence requests

- Major family events – each request will be considered under 'exceptional circumstances' and the decision conveyed to parents. Decisions will depend on the date of the request, the overall percentage attendance of the child to date, the Key Stage of the child and the need to ensure examination periods/the education of the child are not disrupted. Proof may be requested.
- Self-employed workers – some employment may make it difficult for families to spend time together in the Summer Holiday. However, there are other school breaks when such family time can be used. A decision by parents not to spend time together in the other school holiday times, i.e. Christmas or Easter break, because of poor weather (for example) will not be a reason for authorising absences during the warmer school terms. Families need to investigate alternative non-school times throughout the year to spend time together. The school notes that those parents who are self-employed are able to select when they take their annual leave, and reiterate that holidays must not be taken in term time. Legislation no longer allows Head Teachers to authorise absence from school for a term time holiday.
- Non-School Sporting or Music events – absences will be approved for the day of the sporting event only if a pupil's attendance record is excellent. Evidence of the event must be received.
- Non-School Performing, filming, modelling, paid-sporting events – Organisers of such events must apply to Cheshire East Council in order to obtain a performing licence for pupils. Further information can be found here: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/schools/parents/education_welfare_service/children_in_entertainment/children_in



[entertainment.aspx](#) A request will then be sent to school to authorise the absence. Absences will be approved according to the licence only if the pupil's attendance record is excellent.

- Delayed or altered flights – we understand that flights may be changed due to reasons out of parents' control. Evidence of this should be passed to the school office otherwise this may not be authorised.

If you decide to take a holiday or request a leave of absence during term time what should you do?

- The parent/carer with whom the child resides must apply in writing to the school using a Request for Leave of Absence Form (available on our website and in the school office).
- The form should be at the school office a minimum of two weeks prior to the commencement of the absence. Any leave of absence is likely to be unauthorised if the request is received with fewer than two weeks' notice.

What will the school do then?

- The Principal will determine whether the exceptional circumstance ruling applies, if not the application will be declined.
- You will receive a written response from the Principal (or the Vice-Principal) letting you know if your application has been approved.
- If the holiday goes ahead after the application has been declined the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

What will happen if the absence is unauthorised?

- The school will decide if a Fixed Penalty Notice should be issued. This is usually because the holiday has not been authorised as the reasons have not met the exceptional circumstance criteria, and the holiday is more than 10 sessions. If the school decides that a Fixed Penalty Notice is to be issued:
 - You will receive a letter from the school advising that it has referred the matter to the Local Authority and that a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued.
 - The school will inform the Local Authority that a Fixed Penalty Notice needs to be issued.
 - A Fixed Penalty Notice will be sent to you, accompanied by an explanatory letter; the Notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty fine instead of being prosecuted in the criminal courts.

Penalties for unauthorised absence		
Timeline	One child	Two children
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance

Payments will not be accepted after the 28th day and payments cannot be paid in part or by instalments.

My child has a sibling at a different school. What happens with family holidays?

Since the change in the requirement for all Cheshire East schools to follow the Cheshire East holiday programme, there are cases where schools in the same locality are operating different schedules. Where this affects siblings, Cheshire East recommends that Head Teachers should not request that the local authority issues a Fixed Penalty Notice, if parents choose to have an unauthorised holiday. Whilst pupils will receive unauthorised absence marks, they should not receive a penalty notice.

Education Welfare Service

The school employs the services of an Education Welfare Officer. The EWO supports school to improve the attendance of identified children. This may involve a home visit by the EWO. Parents can contact the EWO by ringing school to arrange an appointment.

Identification & Referral

After ten weeks in school, a letter is usually sent home once a child's attendance has fallen below 93%, or if there is a particular pattern of absence, such as persistent lateness. Discretion will be used in making the decision to send a letter home if the letter is due to a long-term illness. A further letter is sent home if a child's attendance doesn't improve or if



Wistaston Church Lane Academy

"We will challenge, excite and encourage a love of life and learning in every child"

Pupil Attendance and Registration Policy

Page 7

it falls below 90%. The school will keep records as to who has received a letter. If there is no improvement, then the matter will be referred to an Education Welfare Officer.

Any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or who has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school sessions or more will be reported to the Local Authority and a fixed penalty notice may be issued.

Where can I find out more?

Cheshire East School Attendance:

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/schools/parents/education_welfare_service/school_attendance.aspx

Department for Education: www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview