



West Winch Primary School Attendance & Absence Policy 2018

Purpose

West Winch Primary School is committed to providing an effective education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. For a child to reach their full educational potential, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the crucial importance of regular and punctual attendance.

The Law

The law states that it is no longer possible to routinely authorise absence from school. Please read this policy before requesting permission to take your child out of school. **You are highly unlikely to be granted authorisation for a leave of absence.**

Accepted Absence

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised, an approved educational activity (attendance out of school) or unable to attend due to 'exceptional' authorised circumstances. Only the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or a member of the Leadership Team can authorise absence. If there is no known reason provided by the parent/carer for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Medical or dental appointments may be authorised if there are no alternative times available and your child's absence is not below 90%. However, routine check-ups or medical appointments should always take place outside school hours if at all possible. Illness must be notified to the school on the first morning of absence. Medical notes or additional information may be requested if the absence is prolonged or recurring. We follow a standard procedure when tracking absence, where a reason for absence has not been identified and the actions that we take are in direct relation to the length of time a child is absent.

Holidays in term-time are not an acceptable reason for absence. This is a legal change and not the independent decision of Governors or the Headteacher.

Exceptional Circumstances

Other absence will only be authorised if 'exceptional' circumstances are identified. There must be a very strong case for why it would be impossible for the pupil to miss an occasion or event.

Each case of 'exceptional circumstances' will be treated individually, but in each case, the Headteacher will treat families as fairly as possible where leave of absence may be granted.

Where siblings attend another school, it may be deemed appropriate to consult with the Headteacher of that school. Each application is individual to the pupil and it is for the Headteacher of each school to come to a decision.

The Headteacher will consider any request for 'exceptional' pupil absence following the latest Department for Education guidelines and the following points - *the child's previous attendance history at school and the time of year (e.g. SATs or assessments)*.

Penalty Notices

Penalty notices are fines of **£60** to **£120** imposed **per parent** and **per pupil** when absence has fallen below **90%**. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. They can only be issued by a Headteacher or someone authorised by them (a Deputy or member of the Leadership Team) and by the Local Authority Officer or the police. All schools in Norfolk must send details of any penalty notices that are issued to the Local Authority.

Penalty notices are issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.

Penalties can also be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school. Penalties may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion of this and the days to which it applies. Please discuss with the school any request for leave of absence prior to making any arrangements. At West Winch, the person designated is the Headteacher. It is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure they have received confirmation from the school before the leave of absence is taken. Do not assume permission is granted if you have not received written confirmation. If the Headteacher does not approve an application for leave of absence an appeal can be made through the Governing Body. This cannot be made retrospectively after the leave of absence has been taken.

Policy Adopted: Summer 2018

Policy Review: Summer 2019, with additional amendments as required throughout the year.



Heather Habbin - Chair of Governing Body.