



WHITMORE
PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Attendance Policy

September 2018

All children need to be in school, on time, everyday.

At Whitmore Primary School & Nursery we are committed to regular attendance and punctuality. We will offer support and advice to ensure every child receives the education to which they are entitled.

Attendance at our school is extremely important and is a high priority. Valuable learning time is missed when children are late or do not come to school.

Procedures

- The school will make parents/carers aware of the attendance information in the school prospectus.
- On the first day of a child's absence parents/carers should have phoned the school before 9.00 am. (They can leave a message on the absence line or speak to someone in the office.) If a parent/carer has not telephoned we will telephone them.
- Every reason for absence will be recorded.
- If a child answers the telephone or there is no reply, it might be necessary to contact the Police or Social Services. The school will use their discretion in this matter.
- All the registers will be regularly monitored. There might be a pattern of absenteeism, picked up by the class teacher or the office staff and this should be reported to the Headteacher. In the case of persistent absence for illness, evidence of a visit to the doctor will be required. This will be reported to the Family Support Officer (Mrs Earlam), who will invite the family into school to attend a School-Based Meeting ('SBM').
- Occasionally, children have not attended school because of family problems. Families will be referred to our Inclusion Manager who will decide whether the family needs support from outside services including Social Care or MECES.
- If a parent/carer has not responded to the concerns of the school and the attendance does not improve, a series of letters will be sent highlighting the procedures the school is legally bound to make which includes the involvement of MECES (Missing Children In Education Services). This will often result in prosecution.
- Occasionally, the school will ask MECES to attend a meeting with the parent/carer in the school. These meetings can result in prosecution.

Lateness

- Morning session begins at 8.50am in KS1 and 8.45am in KS2.
- In-class registers close at 8:55 am
- Children arriving after 8:55 will be marked as late
- After **9.05 am** lateness is recorded as 'U' (late after register closed) A mark of 'U' is an unauthorised mark.
- **Persistent lateness can incur a fine.**

How we celebrate good attendance

Certificates and rewards are given for 100% attendance during the whole term. Bronze, Silver and Gold badges are awarded for 100% attendance at the end of each term.

Weekly class attendance leaves are given, the class teacher decides upon a reward, the class with the best attendance at the end of each half term will be able to have a non-uniform day on the first day back.

At the end of the year children with 100% attendance will be taken on a trip. They will also be entered into a draw to win a prize.

Term-Time Holidays

There have been no changes to policy since a letter was sent on 10 September 2013 to Parents/Carers on the subject of Term-Time Holidays with the following content:

The Education regulations set by the Department of Education state that 'Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.' From 1 September 2013, if you remove your child for circumstances other than exceptional, a penalty notice (fine) to each parent/carer will be issued by Essex County Council. This is to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. The timescale for paying a penalty notice is £60 (if paid within 21 days) or £120 (if paid within 28 days). If you wish to read the guidelines set by DoE, see:- www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance.

Parents need to complete a holiday application form with an accompanying letter if they wish to apply to the Headteacher for term-time absence due to exceptional circumstances.

How we share attendance information

Attendance is mentioned on the newsletter every week.

Individual annual figures for attendance and lateness are featured on pupil reports.

School annual figures are published on the web-site

How we support families

Our Family Support Officer – Mrs Earlam is responsible for attendance monitoring and reports directly to the Headteacher – Mrs Kemp. Through her role she has regular contact with parents regarding attendance and punctuality. In all instances it is our priority to discuss attendance concerns with parents either on the telephone or face to face.

The following process is used when a child's attendance drops below 95% or punctuality is a concern:

- There will be an initial discussion with Mrs Earlam to explore why the attendance/ punctuality is below the threshold. During this discussion she will offer support and guidance, in collaboration with the parents, to enable the attendance to improve. Mrs Earlam will continue to collaborate with parents to ensure that attendance improves
- If no improvement is seen an initial attendance/ lateness letter is sent (example letter 1or 4)

- If attendance/punctuality does not improve then the Headteacher is notified and a School Based Meeting (example letter 2) with Mrs Earlam is arranged. This is a more formal meeting where further actions to improve are agreed.
- Where there is no improvement seen a follow-up letter will be sent (example letter 3)
- Failure to improve attendance will result in a meeting with Mrs Kemp to further discuss non attendance and the legal implications
- Further failure to improve attendance/punctuality would then result in a legal warning letter (example letter 5) . This is to ensure that parents are fully aware of their legal obligation to ensure their children are attending school regularly and on time
- Any further non-attendance without sufficient medical evidence would result in a referral to The Missing Children in Education Service where further legal proceedings with potential prosecution will commence. Heavier fines, parental orders and time in custody are all real possibilities for persistent non-attendance at school.

The school is committed to working closely with parents so that we can ensure that all children are in school, on time, everyday.

The Government Guidance document can be found here

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/564599/school_attendance.pdf

The Impact of Attendance on Academic Achievement

ATTENDANCE %	NUMBER OF DAYS LOST	IMPACT ON YOUR EDUCATION
100%	None! Outstanding Attendance! Excellent work, well done	This gives you the best chance to achieve your potential as 78.7% of students with 100% attendance achieve 5+ A*-C including English and Maths.
> = 97%	Great Attendance Fewer than 6 days of absence in one academic year You are above the school attendance target, well done!	
95 – 96.9%	Less than 10 days of absence Students are likely to achieve their targets and will be well prepared as they move through school	Statistics show that 69.1% of students in this attendance bracket go on to achieve 5+ A*-C including English and Maths.
92 - 94.9%	Up to 15 days of absence – if your attendance is in this category you will have had up to 3 weeks absent in the school year	According to statistics, only just over half (52.8%) of students in this attendance bracket achieve 5+ A*-C including English and Maths.
90 - 91.9%	You will have had up to 19 days of absence (up to 3 weeks and 4 days) Pupils in this category may fall behind and it will be difficult for them to achieve their best	Attendance in this bracket is a major concern and should be addressed quickly. Only just over half (52.8%) of students in this attendance bracket go on to achieve 5+ A*-C including English and Maths.
< 90%	Persistently Absent : you will have had more than 19 days absence (more than 3 weeks and 4 days) over the academic year. This is very poor attendance and the Educational Welfare Officer may become involved	Poor attendance – this is extremely worrying Of those students with below 90% attendance, only 35.6% are likely to achieve 5 A* - C including English and Maths (according to statistics).

The Impact of Lateness:

Minutes late per day	Equates to days of teaching lost in one year	Which means this number of lessons missed
5 mins	10 Days	17 Lessons
10 mins	7 Days	35 Lessons
15 mins	10.5 Days	52 Lessons
20 mins	14 Days	70 Lessons
30 mins	21 Days	104 Lessons

Example letters

1. Initial attendance letter:

Child's Name: xxxxxxxx

Class: xxxxxx

I am writing in connection with xxxxxx attendance record. xxxxxx attendance is currently xxx%.

On 1 September 2015, the Government reduced the persistent absentee threshold from 15% to 10%. This now classes a student with attendance below 90% as a persistent absentee, compared with the previous figure of 85%, regardless of whether the school has authorised or unauthorised the absence.

Your child's academic attainment suffers if they miss school frequently, so I am asking that xxxxx attends regularly in the future. I understand that occasional illness is unavoidable and ask that you ensure that you co-operate by informing the school on the first day of absence giving the reason and expected duration. I look forward to working together to improve xxxxx attendance.

By law, all children of compulsory school age must receive suitable full-time education. As a parent you are committing an offence if you fail to ensure your child attends school regularly, even if they are missing school without your knowledge. You run the risk of being given a penalty notice or being taken to Court. A penalty of £60 may be issued by the LA as an alternative to prosecution. This rises to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. Failure to pay will lead to prosecution. Parents can be fined up to £2500 and/or imprisoned for failing to ensure their child attends school regularly.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school office if you would like to discuss this matter with Mrs Kemp- Headteacher.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Nina Kemp

Mrs K Earlam

Headteacher

Attendance Officer

2. School Based Meeting:

Re: School Based Meeting –

We would like to invite you to a School Based Meeting on xxxxx at xxxxx You will be meeting Mrs Earlam, Attendance Officer/ or Mrs Kemp, Headteacher

We would appreciate your co-operation with this matter and would request that you attend the meeting. If you are unable to attend on the xxxx , we would request that you contact the office on (01268) 520435, to arrange a different appointment if required.

We would like to remind you that if a penalty notice is issued from Missing Education and Child Employment Service each parent will have to of £60 for each child to be paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid within the time scale the penalty will increase to £120. If the higher penalty is not paid with 28 days, the Missing Education and Child Employment Service will then institute legal proceedings against you in the magistrate's court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure your child attends school regularly.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs N. Kemp

Headteacher

3. SBM Follow-up letter:

Child's Name:

Class:

Following our recent meeting I am sorry to note that xxxxx has again been absent from school without medical evidence being provided. As you are aware, this absence cannot be authorised.

I will continue to monitor xxxx attendance, and should xxx have further unauthorised absences a referral will be made to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service and a legal warning letter will be sent.

By law, all children of compulsory school age must receive suitable full-time education. As a parent you are committing an offence if you fail to ensure your child attends school regularly, even if they are missing school without your knowledge. You run the risk of being given a penalty notice or being taken to Court. A penalty of £60 may be issued by the LA as an alternative to prosecution. This rises to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. Failure to pay will lead to prosecution. Parents can be fined up to £2500 and/or imprisoned for failing to ensure their child attends school regularly.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school office, if you would like to discuss this matter further with Mrs Kemp - Headteacher.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Nina Kemp
Headteacher

Mrs Kelly Earlam
Attendance Officer

4. Lateness letter:

Attendance and Punctuality

Child's name: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Between xxxxxxx and xxxxxx your child was late: x **times**

It is vitally important that your child gets to their classroom on time each morning. It is in the best interests of your child to be ready to learn with the rest of their class in order to feel settled, raise self-esteem, have good relationships and access the lessons planned for them. At Whitmore we place a high priority on this. Please ensure your child is in class ready for registration at 8.45am for key stage 2 and 8.50am for key stage 1.

If your child is late on several occasions then a referral could be made to Education Welfare Service which can result in a penalty notice being issued to each parent of £60 for each child to be paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid within the time scale the penalty will increase to £120. If the higher penalty is not paid with 28 days, the Education Welfare Service will then institute legal proceedings against you in the magistrate's court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure your child attends school regularly.

We appreciate your co-operation in getting your children into school on time so they are ready to start their learning.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs N. Kemp

Headteacher

cc: Missing Education and Child Employment Service

5. Legal Warning Letter:

Private & Confidential – Addressee Only

Our ref:

Date:

SS14 2TT

PENALTY NOTICE / LEGAL ACTION WARNING

Pupil's name: xxxxxx

D.O.B: xxxxx

It is noted that you are the parent of, or have day to day care of xxxx, a child who is a registered pupil at this school and is not in regular attendance as required by the Education Act 1996, Section 7.

xxxx has been recorded as having xx school sessions (equivalent to x school days) lost due to unauthorised absences between the dates of xxxxx and xxxxx.

It is recommended that you take immediate steps to ensure that the child named above attends school regularly. If this is not achieved and there are further unauthorised absences a referral will be made to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service and you may be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure regular attendance at school. However, depending upon the circumstances, you may be provided with an opportunity to discharge the offence by paying a penalty notice which imposes a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 22 days and 28 days. Should you fail to pay within the prescribed timescales, you will be prosecuted for the original offence.

Please note: If you have previously been the subject of a prosecution for any child in relation to irregular school attendance and the attendance of Charlie does not improve to a satisfactory level immediately, you may be required to attend a formal pre-court interview. This interview will be carried out under caution to investigate the circumstances.

When deciding upon the most appropriate action, the Local Authority has a duty to consider if the making of an Education Supervision Order would be appropriate. If an assessment of the situation indicates that this may be appropriate, and no improvement is achieved, you may be invited to a pupil planning meeting.

It is important for you to note that the above absences may be included if any further action is taken against you.

Another parent/carer or someone with day-to-day responsibility regarding the above named child may have also received this letter. Each adult holds separate responsibility and will also be required to take appropriate action to ensure there are no further unauthorised absences.

Further information on school attendance and Essex County Council's policies may be found at www.essex.gov.uk. Should you have any queries or wish to discuss your child's attendance, please contact the school.

The attached 'Legal information for Parents and Carers' provides you with further information on legal proceedings in relation to irregular school attendance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "N. Kemp".

Mrs N. Kemp

Headteacher

Telephone: (01268) 520435

Email: admin@whitmore-pri.essex.sch.uk

Enc: Legal Information Fact Sheet

c.c. Missing Education and Child Employment Service

School Attendance

Information from Missing Education & Child Employment Service

Legal information for Parents and Carers

The Education Act 1996

By law – all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude or any special educational needs they may have. The school starting date is the beginning of the term after which the child reaches their 5th birthday. The school leaving date is the last Friday in June of the academic year in which the child reaches their 16th birthday.

Parents / Carers – are responsible for

- registering their child at a school or making other arrangements which provide an efficient education
- ensuring their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered
- applying for a planned absence of leave from school
- notifying the school when their child is absent unexpectedly

Schools – must either

- give permission for your child to be absent from school
- mark unexpected absences as authorised
- or mark the absence as unauthorised

The Law – says that parents/carers whose children are absent from school without good reason are committing an offence

Your child – may be referred to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service (MECES) because the school is concerned about the level of their attendance.

Warning Letters and School Attendance Meetings

Depending upon individual circumstances, you may be sent a letter warning that if there are further unauthorised absences within a certain period of time (specified on the letter) you will

be issued with a penalty notice or prosecuted. Or you could be invited to attend a School Attendance Meeting (SAM), chaired by a Local Authority representative. The School Attendance Meeting is a formal meeting and parent/carers are cautioned that if there are further unauthorised absences following the SAM, a penalty notice will be issued or prosecution instigated.

Legal action available to Local Authorities includes:

Penalty Notices

Issued to each parent for each child for the sum of £60 to be paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid within this time it will increase to £120 which must be paid within the following 7 days (a total of 28 days from issue). If the higher payment is not paid the Missing Education & Child Employment Service will instigate legal proceedings. There is no right of appeal and payment will not be accepted after the 28th day.

Prosecution

In the magistrates court under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. This offence carries a fine of up to £1000 for each parent.

Or

In the magistrates court under section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996. This offence carries a fine up to £2,500 and/or a 3 months custodial sentence for each parent if it is found that you knew about your child's absences and failed, without reasonable justification, to ensure attendance.

If you fail to attend court for the hearing the matter may either be dealt with in your absence or, occasionally, a warrant issued for your arrest. The magistrates will sentence you in accordance with their sentencing powers.

The magistrates may also consider imposing a Parenting Order which consists of two elements: a core element requiring the parent to attend guidance sessions to help them in dealing with their children and a control element requiring a parent to exercise control over ensuring attendance and communications with the relevant authorities

Education Supervision Order (ESO)

Applied for by the Local Authority through the family court under the Children Act 1989 section 36. Such an order allows a supervising officer, appointed by the court, to provide advice, guidance and give directions to you and/or your child aimed at ensuring regular school attendance. If you do not comply with a reasonable direction you may be prosecuted for breaching the Order and you may also be prosecuted for failing to ensure regular school attendance

Defences to non-school attendance

The legal reasons (defences) for non-school attendance are –

- the child is prevented from attending school due to sickness or other unplanned or unavoidable causes
- the child is absent due to a day of religious observance in the parent's/carer's religion
- the school has granted and authorised the leave
- the child lives more than 2 miles if under 8 years or 3 miles if over 8 years from the school and the local authority has failed to provide transport.

It is not a defence where parents have chosen to register a child at a school outside the catchment area and no transport has been provided.