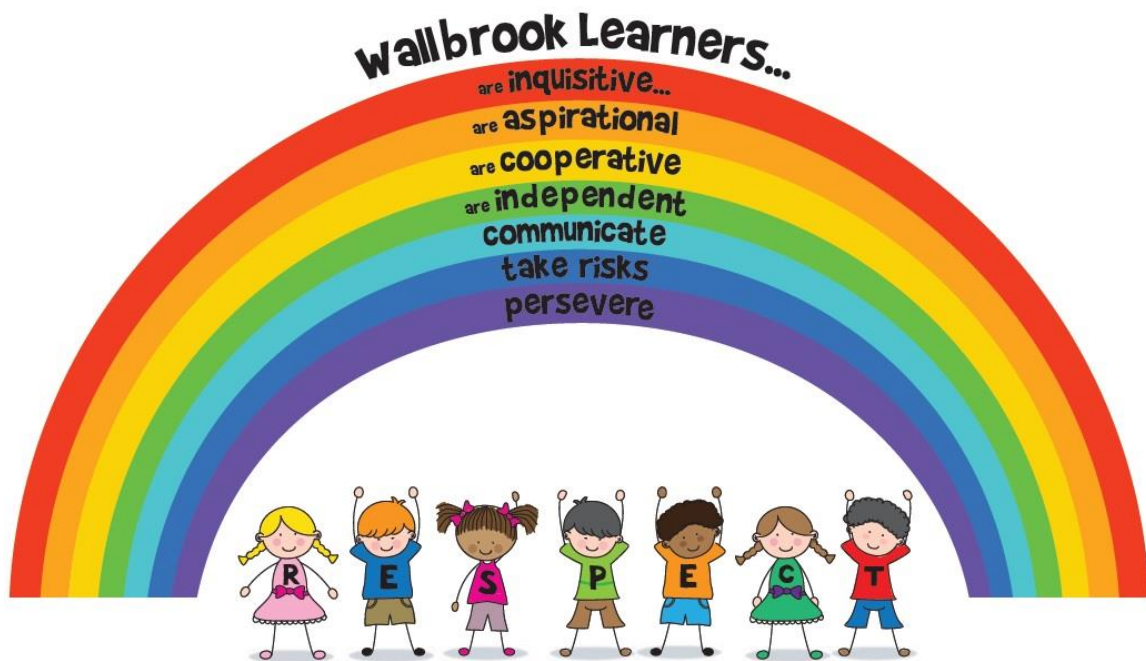




ATTENDANCE POLICY



Policy Date: November 2019
Review Date: November 2020

INTRODUCTION

Wallbrook Primary is on a journey to become a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS SO IMPORTANT

Learning: - Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding: - Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, we will adhere to the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (July 2018) & Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2019) by:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's health and development;
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- Taking action to enable all children have the best life chances.
- Identifying where early support through Early Help assessment may be beneficial.

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our weekly Newsletter;
- Report to you at least termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Good and improving attendance is rewarded through certificates, vouchers, prizes and activities/events;

THE LAW RELATING TO ATTENDANCE

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:

- To age, ability and aptitude and
- To any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

THE LAW RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCES

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Unauthorised leave of absence / holiday or day trips in term time.
- Absence from individual lessons – should your child be present for registration but then fail to attend subsequent lessons (without permission) school reserve the right to amend the register code for that school session to unauthorised to reflect lesson absence. In the event of this happening parents would be notified by telephone and/or a letter by 1st class post on the same school day.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it won't help to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Any student at Wallbrook Primary School identified as having **attendance below 93%** will have all further absence **unauthorised** on the school's register. However, should parent(s) provide evidence from a medical practitioner advising that the period of absence was necessary, the absence for the evidence period will be authorised.

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

| CODE | DESCRIPTION | MEANING |
|-------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| / | Present (AM) | Present |
| \ | Present (PM) | Present |
| B | Educated off site (NOT Dual registration) | Approved Education Activity |
| C | Other Authorized Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) | Authorised absence |
| D | Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment) | Approved Education Activity |
| E | Excluded (no alternative provision made) | Authorised absence |
| F | Extended family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| G | Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement) | Unauthorised absence |
| H | Family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| I | Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments) | Authorised absence |
| J | Interview | Approved Education Activity |
| L | Late (before registers closed) | Present |
| M | Medical/Dental appointments | Authorised absence |
| N | No reason yet provided for absence | Unauthorised absence |
| O | Unauthorized absence (not covered by any other code/description) | Unauthorised absence |
| P | Approved sporting activity | Approved Education Activity |
| R | Religious observance | Authorised absence |
| S | Study leave | Authorised absence |
| T | Traveler absence | Authorised absence |
| U | Late (after registers closed) | Unauthorised absence |
| V | Educational visit or trip | Approved Education Activity |
| W | Work experience | Approved Education Activity |
| X | Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Z | Pupil not yet on roll | Not counted in possible attendances |
| # | School closed to pupils | Not counted in possible attendances |

PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)

A pupil becomes a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss **10%** or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The Headteacher and Attendance Consultant monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

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

ABSENCE PROCEDURE

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence – telephone 01384 818985;
- Inform school on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence if you have not already done so;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the school's Attendance Consultant and/or the Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to our Attendance Consultant and/or the Local Authority if attendance moves below 95%.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. **You have a duty to notify school as soon as possible of any changes to contact details.**

THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CONSULTANT

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may discuss matters with our appointed Attendance Support Officer. He/she will discuss matters and try to resolve the situation by agreement. However, if your child's attendance does not improve and unauthorised absences persist school may refer the case to the Education Investigation Officer (EIO) from the Local Authority. They are a statutory service who issue sanctions such as Penalty Notices or refer the case for prosecution in the Magistrates Court based on the evidence provided by the school.

Alternatively, parents/carers may wish to contact the EIO themselves to ask for advice and information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice, in accordance with their statutory duties.

Their telephone number is 01384 814317.

For general information regarding school absence visit:

<https://www.dudley.gov.uk/.../parental-support/dudley-education-investigation-service>

Attendance Strategies

Wallbrook does all it can to promote good attendance for all pupils and uses the following attendance strategies:

- Weekly attendance analysis
- Improved attendance letter
- Attendance certificates
- Attendance assemblies
- Interventions (breakfast club, meet & greet)
- Maintaining positive communication (school refuser / long term illness etc.)
- First day absence contact
- Unexplained absence letter
- Punctuality letter
- Suspected holiday in term time letter
- Issue below 95% attendance letter
- Issue below 93% attendance letter (medical evidence required)
- Issue below 90% (persistent absence) attendance letter
- Attendance clinics
- Home visits
- LEA referrals

The School Day

The school day starts at **8.45am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers will be marked at **8.55am** and your child will receive a 'L' late mark if they are not present in class.

The register will be closed **at 9.30am**. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

If unauthorised lateness persists it could result in a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of a Penalty Notice or enforcement proceedings against you.

Late arrivals must be signed in via the main school office. Children in Years R, 1, 2, 3 and 4 **MUST** be signed in by an adult. **Children in Year 5 & 6 are able to sign in unaccompanied.**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information for and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons. This can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage absence.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher, Pastoral & Safeguarding Lead and/or the Attendance Consultant to resolve the problem. You can however approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Our school day ends at **3.25pm**.

When the children need to come and go during the school day they **MUST** be signed in and out at the school office. **This is an exceptionally important procedure to ensure the safety of both pupils and staff in the event of fire or emergency.**

HOLIDAY IN TERM TIME/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Wallbrook operates a 'NO LEAVE POLICY'

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

"It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are exceptional reasons, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the Headteacher (not the Local Authority) or the headteacher's designated may authorise such a request. All applications for leave of absence must be made in writing. Where a parent takes a leave of absence to which the application was refused or takes a leave of absence where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty fine (upon a return from school leave) by the Local Authority may be requested. When requesting a fixed penalty fine the school may calculate the period of days taken within a 12 week period."

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and the government have amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as of September 2013 to reflect this.

Leave of absence shall not be granted unless –

- (a) an application has been made in advance to the proprietor by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides; and
- (b) the proprietor, or a person authorised by the proprietor in accordance with paragraph (1), considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

In light of the changes to the Pupil Registration regulations, Wallbrook Primary will only grant leave where parents can prove exceptional circumstances.

All applications must be made in writing to the Head Teacher at least 5 school days prior to the requested leave date.

Where the decision is made not to authorise leave in term time, school will inform parent/carers in writing. A general guide for parent's is leave for any holiday, activity or event that could be arranged during the annual 13 holiday time would not be authorised.

Failure to notify and/or request leave of absence in term time, providing at least 5 days' notice will result in all absence being recorded as 'O' (unauthorised absence not covered by any other description).

On any occasion that school refuses a request for leave in term time, should parent/carers proceed with the leave it will be recorded as a (G) (family holiday not agreed or in excess of agreement), on schools register.

Where a parent takes a leave of absence to which the application was refused or takes a leave of absence where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty fine (upon a return from such leave) by the local authority may be requested. When requesting a penalty fine the school may calculate the period of days taken within a 12 month period.

If a pupil does not return to school after the leave of absence date, school will investigate the reasons surrounding the absence, refer to the Local Authority and under Regulation 8, 1 (f) of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 consider removal from the school register.

SCHOOL TARGET, PROJECTS AND SPECIAL INITIATIVES

Wallbrook Primary School has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school are displayed on the attendance board in the school hall.

The minimum level of attendance for the school is **96%**. We will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. **Our target is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to children fulfilling their potential.**

The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Data collection/monitoring

Mrs C Longden

Head Teacher

Mrs Natalie Cheadle

Pastoral & Safeguarding Lead

First day absence calling

Mrs D Tipper

Office Administration

SUMMARY

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils; as the best way to guarantee as high a level of attendance as possible and that through good attendance, ensures that every child's welfare and life's opportunities are promoted.

GDPR

This policy adheres to the principles under data protection law. For further information please review the school's data protection policy published on the school's website.