

Western Primary School

Attendance Policy

Western Primary School seeks to ensure that we create a positive, welcoming and safe environment where children, staff and parents/carers feel valued. We seek to ensure that all pupils receive a full time education which maximises opportunities for every pupil to realise his/her potential. In order for children to reach their full potential, it is vital that pupils attend school regularly and on time. Attendance is clearly linked to achievement and attainment and research shows that poor school attendance has a detrimental effect on future prospects and the future learning potential of children. Poor attendance can also have a detrimental effect on our children's well-being and personal development by making it difficult for them to make and maintain friendships.

Aims:

- Western Primary School aims to provide a stimulating and friendly environment in which children can learn so that they actively want to attend school.
- Attendance and punctuality are encouraged, and these areas are explored from within the curriculum so that our children appreciate and value their importance.
- To make attendance and punctuality procedure a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
- To maintain a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- All staff and pupils regard taking the register as being an integral and key part of the school day.
- To further develop positive and consistent communications between home and school.
- To promote effective partnerships with the North East Lincolnshire Education Welfare Department.
- To ensure awareness of the times for the beginning of each session, school term dates and training days.
- To clarify procedures for parents with regards to lateness and absence.
- To promote expectation of absence letter/phone calls from parents and also holiday procedures.
- Particular attention must be paid to the accuracy of registers which should be kept for a minimum of three years.
- Sims OMR mark sheets will be filled in with a pencil dash in the appropriate column by the class teacher at the time of taking the register. Staff should leave the mark

sheet blank if a child is not present in the classroom at the time of completing the register.

- Children arriving after formal registration, 09:10 am and 13:10pm, will be recorded by the member of staff on 'late duty' in the open area of the school with a double dash on the OMR recording sheet and the minutes late will be recorded on SIMs. A child arriving after formal registration closes, 09:10 or 13:10pm, will be marked on the register as "late after registration has closed" (U) and this is counted as an unauthorised absence and again the minutes late will be recorded on SIMs. If lateness persists then parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of how many times the child has been late and how many minutes late they have accumulated. Persistent unauthorised lateness will result in parents/carers invited into school to discuss ways in which school can support improved punctuality.
- Absences should be of two kinds – authorised and unauthorised. Absences, both authorised and unauthorised will be marked in the SIMs system by using the correct code and imputing the reason for an authorised absence.
- Parents/carers should contact school on the first day of their child's absence either by telephone or by a written signed message. If parents have not contacted the school before 09:30 am then the Learning Mentor/school secretary will contact parents/carers to establish the reason for the absence. If the school does not make contact with the parents/carers then a text message will be sent to the main contact of the child absent. Should the school have further concerns or the child has a poor attendance then the Learning Mentor will make a home visit the same day of the absence to discuss why they are absent. If parents/ carers are not in then a letter will be left explaining the reason for the visit and for them to contact school as soon as possible.
- If there is no reason given for the child's absence, on the child's return, a formal letter will be sent home requesting the reason for the child's absence. If this is not replied to after seven days then the absence will be deemed as unauthorised.
- A record file will be kept noting and monitoring all absences and holidays requests and all letters should be kept.

Authorised absence is granted under the following circumstances:

- Exclusion
- Days of Religious observance
- Medical/Dental appointments that cannot be taken out of school hours and there is documented evidence, such as an appointment card, medical passport stamped or a formal letter seen.
- Illness – with written parental consent or verbal consent via telephone contact.
- Prevention from attending by an unavoidable cause, agreed beforehand by a member of SMT.

- Attending a family funeral (this must not, however, exceed an agreed period of absence)
- Family holiday which has been granted by the Head Teacher in line with the North East Lincolnshire guidance.
- Children who are on school trips should be marked as being present using registration code **V** (attending an approved educational visit or trip). This will be taken into account when attendance percentages are being calculated.
- Pupils attending a Pupil Referral Unit will be registered offsite (code D dual registration) and will send a weekly report to the school.
- The Learning Mentor will closely monitor attendance and audit every month and discuss with the Head Teacher on a regular basis.
- The Learning Mentor will also meet with the Governor for attendance and discuss policy and procedures.

Holiday Absence

There have been amendments made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments, described below, came into force on 1st September 2013

Term Time Holiday

The new legislation makes it clear that Head teachers/Principals may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances as to why the holiday cannot be taken at any other time outside of term time. These circumstances must be detailed on the leave of absence form obtained from the school office prior to the holiday, as retrospective consent cannot be given. Evidence in support of these circumstances must also be provided to the school when the leave of absence form is submitted –for example, a doctor’s or health professionals certificate in support of a family crisis or serious illness.

When considering requested for leave of absence in term time, Head teachers should take into account that absence shall not be granted unless:

- A request has been made in advance to the Head teacher by a parent whom the pupil normally resides with.
- The Head teacher, or a person authorised by the Head teacher, considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances relating to that request.

In deciding whether or not to grant the request for leave of absence the following should be taken into account:

- Overall pattern of attendance
- Age of the child/children

- Time of year and examinations
- Length, destination and purpose of the holiday
- Family circumstances and the parents/carers reasons for wanting to take their annual during holiday term time.
- The pupil's ability to catch up missed work.

The DSCF guidelines specifically state that holidays taken for the following reasons should not be authorised:

- Availability of cheap flights or holiday
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather in school holidays
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term.

Unauthorised holidays

Unauthorised holidays may be subject to a penalty notice if the school believes it to be appropriate and just after taking into consideration all factors.

The Education Welfare Service will be informed of any days where:

- Leave of absence has not been granted
- A holiday is taken without requesting leave of absence
- Days in excess of any permitted leave are taken
- Request for a penalty notice

Extended leave

Careful consideration will be given by the school, to requests from parents for extended leave. The school will endeavour to gather as much relevant information about the visit as possible, including contact numbers, addresses, email addresses etc. An expected date of return should be provided by the parents.

Penalty Notices

Amendments have also been made to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices)(England)(amendment)Regulations 2013. These amendments are described as below and came into force on 1st September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedure for issuing penalty notices to **each** parent/carer who fails to ensure their child's/children regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of exclusion.

Parents/carers must now pay £60 within 21 days or £240 within 28 days.

Parent/Carer's Responsibility

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that children of compulsory school age regularly attend their registered school. The Education Act 1966 clearly states "If any child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his or her parents/carers are guilty of an offence".

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Ensure that their child/children attend school regularly
- Ensure that their child/children arrive at school on time
- Ensure that they collect their child/children on time at the end of each day
- Inform the school of their child's/children's absence on the first day of non-attendance by 09:30am.
- Inform the school of any changes to their contact details
- Inform the school if someone other than themselves will be picking their child/children up
- Keeping school informed of anything that might affect the child's/children's attendance or punctuality.
- Ensure that they work with school if attendance becomes a problem
- Try to get medical, dental and optician appointments after school finishes at 3:30. If an appointment is in school time then collect a medical passport from the front reception desk and ask the medical professional to stamp and sign this, alternatively bring in your appointment card/letter for us to photocopy.

Children who leave the school premises without permission

When a child leaves the school premises without permission or under the direct supervision of a member of school staff then the procedures are:

- For a member of staff to follow the child with a mobile phone and keep in constant contact with the school.
- A member of staff to contact the parents/cares of the child and explain the circumstances and the procedures.
- The school secretary to inform the police.
- When the child has been located a meeting will be held with the Head teacher, the child and the parents/carers.

Children Missing From Education

Children go missing from the education system because they:

- Fail to start at Reception entry, hence never entering the authority's system
- Failure to complete transition at Key stage 2 to 3 (Primary to Secondary)
- Medical reasons
- Cease to attend due to unofficial exclusion
- Are withdrawn by parents/carers
- Elective home educated
- Transfer between local authorities
- Are transient and traveller families
- Arrive in the country via asylum, refuge status or as EU national
- Permanent exclusion
- Fail to attend alternative provision or work placements
- Cease to attend for an unknown reason.

Procedures for Children Missing from Education

- Contact family, extended family and friends
- After all avenues have been exhausted a CME form will be completed as well as SA5 form.

It is to be noted that personal circumstances of the child or those of their families may contribute to the withdrawal process and the failure to make a transition e/g/ parents/carers escaping domestic abuse, families moved quickly under the police witness protection scheme.

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