

Witherley CE Primary School – Attendance Policy September 2022

Introduction

Witherley CE Primary seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive an education which enables them

to maximise opportunities to reach his or her full potential. Research shows there is evidence of a strong link between good attendance and increased attainment. Pupils who regularly attend school make much better progress both socially and academically. Regular

attendance enables pupils to adapt better to routines, schoolwork, and friendship groups. Therefore, those pupils will have a positive experience of learning and a more successful transition from primary to secondary and beyond to further education and training.

School/Academy aims to work in partnership with parents and other agencies to strive towards every child reaching 97% (up to 5 days absence) to ensure that each child can get the best out of the educational opportunities provided.

By working in partnership with parents and other agencies, we can ensure that we have clear and robust strategies in place to manage and promote regular attendance, for all students at Witherley CE Primary.

School Staff to Support Attendance

The School strategic leader/manager for attendance is Mrs D Middleton (headteacher)

The School attendance assistant is Mrs P Short (office manager)

Please contact the attendance assistant on a day-to-day basis when your child is absent or the attendance leader for any queries regarding attendance.

The School safeguarding lead is Mrs D Middleton (headteacher)

The school Education Welfare Officer is Paula Rene

To manage and promote regular attendance Witherley CE Primary will:

- Keep parents updated on the school's overall attendance and individual pupil's attendance via letters home, newsletters, social media and website.
- Follow the DfE and Government guidance in relation to school attendance and COVID-19 (when applicable)
- Follow Public Health guidance should any local lockdowns or outbreaks in school occur.
- Report to parents how their child is achieving in school and how their child's attendance is impacting on this via regular parent evenings.
- Build positive relationships between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. The link between attendance, attainment and wider wellbeing will

- be discussed with parents where necessary
- Utilise attendance data, analysing patterns and trends to target attendance and punctuality improvement across pupil cohorts or individual pupils, to reduce persistent or severe absence from school.
- Review the attendance policy annually and publish on the school website
- Account for and consider the specific needs of pupils and their families where there may be other barriers to attendance (medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities) and provide support to overcome these barriers. (e.g. Early Help or other wider partners)
- Support pupils back into school following a length or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Monitor individual students' attendance to:
 - a) Celebrate good and improved school attendance and reward this through competitions, certificates, and events
 - b) Notify parents when we are worried about their child's attendance by following the procedures below:
 - Parents/carers should advise the school by telephone or email by 9.30 am on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return, if there is no one to take the call an answer phone message can be left. If no communication is received school office staff may contact parents.
 - Parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.
 - Parents/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.

Witherley CE Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

Witherley CE Primary School works closely with Children's Attendance Welfare Services, (CAWS) to address poor attendance, by checking the registers on a regular basis. Should a child be identified who has attendance below 95%, the EWO may write to the parent/carer.

These letters may: -

- Highlight to the parent/carer their child's current attendance; with an invitation for the parent/carer to contact her.
- Inform the parent/carer that attendance will be monitored until it improves.
- If necessary, invite the parent/carer to attend a meeting to address the issues which may be preventing their child from attending school regularly; this is with a view to offering support and solutions to bring about change.

To manage and promote the regular attendance of their children, parents will:

- Understand their legal responsibilities by ensuring regular school attendance with regard to the Section 444(1) and 444 (1A) Education Act 1996 and Section 36 of the Children Act 1989.
- Understand their responsibility to keep the school up to date with at least 2 emergency contact details as required by the Children Missing Education requirements and in line with the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance 2022.
- Impress on their children the importance of regular school attendance by keeping absences to a minimum and ensuring that children are only out of school when they are too sick to attend.
- Establish effective communication with the school and swiftly address any worries their children may have about coming to school so that we can work together to resolve this.
- Contact school on the first day of absence to inform school of the reason and when the child is expected to return. Keep school informed if the absence is likely to continue so that school and partner agencies can ensure that amendments or alternatives can be made to provision if required.
- Provide the school with any medical appointment cards and where possible make appointments out of school hours. If this is not possible, parents should ensure that children attend prior to or following their appointment.
- Attend any meetings called by school and partner agencies to discuss attendance.

In order to support schools and academies in managing and promoting regular school attendance, the Local Authority Attendance Team will;

- Identify a key strategic lead to meet termly with school, to: Support in fulfilling their responsibilities in relation to improving attendance.
- Support the school in promoting attendance by providing advice, guidance and creation of action plans in relation to working together to improve attendance.
- Review referrals from school to address matters of poor school attendance when Early help and intervention has failed to improve attendance

Registration

Gate opens at 8.40am – 8.55am

School day end time 3.15pm

Morning registers should all be completed by 9am

Afternoon registers should be completed by 1.15pm

Any pupils arriving after these times should report to reception so that they can be given a late mark

Absences

Parents are expected to inform school of the reason for absences. However, it is school that makes the decision whether to authorise or unauthorise the absence. School will make this decision based on the information available to them. Parents are encouraged to provide as much information as possible and information such as appointment cards,

medication or application for leave of absence will assist school in making this decision. Re-occurring unauthorised absence (including lateness) will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer and this may lead to legal interventions and a formal assessment.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Registration begins at 8.55am, pupils arriving shortly after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 9.00 am. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late, this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

Pupils arriving late must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

Leave of Absence

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Parents should be aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year. Requests for holiday during school time will be refused. In such instances, the absence will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Fixed Penalty Notice, a fine or a summons to court issued by the Local Authority.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in writing in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

Absence for participation in a performance

In these instances, school will follow Local Authority's guidance and by-laws, working in partnership with Attendance Team to ensure that any performance absence is within the parameters of the law.

Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. The Attendance Policy has a direct link to the safeguarding policy; the behavior policy; anti-bullying strategies and the Health and Safety Policy.

The School/ Academy has also adopted the Local Authority Policies on Children Missing Education, Elective Home Education. The school also follows Local Authority guidance in relation to coding absence for families who travel as part of their culture.

All these policies have been endorsed by our governing body, which support the school in all attempts to improve the attendance and safeguarding agenda.

Development and implementation of this policy will be considered under School/ Academy obligations from the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.