

West Kirby Primary School

WEST KIRBY PRIMARY SCHOOL Attendance Policy 2019

School Vision Statement

We aim to create a happy, caring community where all members are included, secure and confident; have an equal opportunity to fulfil their potential and to develop the skills necessary to make a valuable contribution to society; both now and in the future.

Rationale: This policy reflects the vision and aims of West Kirby Primary School. All staff at our school work collaboratively to encourage every pupil to strive for excellence. Every child is supported, challenged and valued. We are committed to fostering the development of high self-esteem and to encouraging each of our pupils to take pride and ownership of their learning. One of the ways in which we strive to do this is by encouraging staff, parents and children to promote excellent attendance in order to maximise the learning experience for the benefit of each pupil. In order to support this, through this policy we will provide a clear framework for parents and staff as well as clear procedures for involving parents and/or external agencies where appropriate.

This policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils that are registered at our school via the school website.

Introduction:

As a school we have a legal and moral duty to promote good attendance for our children. Parents/carers also have a legal duty to ensure their children attend school. We encourage all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school in order to do this. If you have any concerns about your child's enthusiasm for school; their health; friendships or learning support please contact us. A joint approach is supportive and beneficial for children and parents. As well as school staff, we can also look for support from our partners in the school nursing service, social care team and other professionals.

We classify good attendance as 96%+. That is our aim for all children. Children who have good attendance at school, flourish; socially, emotionally and academically.

Below 95% needs improving. At Parents Evening, Teachers will highlight this so that we can work together to help improve your child's attendance.

Below 90% is a concern. This equates to missing a day of school every fortnight. The Government define this as Persistent Absence: We will contact you about your child's attendance if it falls below 90% and request a school based meeting to look at how we can support your child's attendance at school. Your child's attendance will be monitored daily by our School Office team.

We know that children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Aims & Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all parents, staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to children in Early Years Foundation Stage in order to promote good habits of attendance and punctuality from the start.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Responsibility of Parents/Carers

Punctuality: it is the parent/carers responsibility...

- To ensure that their children arrive at school on time. Staff are on duty in the playground from 8.45am and doors open at 8.50am. Registers are taken at 8.55am and the school day begins with staff talking through what will happen that day.
- To ensure children who are late after 8:55am report to the school office to sign in. Records are kept of the pupils that are late with an L code in the register. Any child that arrives after 9:20am will be marked with a U code, equivalent to an unauthorised absence for the morning session.
- To ensure children are collected promptly at the end of the school day and that necessary arrangements are in place for the journey home. If these differ from the child's normal arrangements, the school office should be made aware of this.

Absences: It is the parent/carer's responsibility...

- To notify the school on the first day of absence before school begins at 8.55am. Parents can report an absence by telephoning the school office or emailing.
- To provide medical evidence where possible, on the child's return to school.
- To ensure that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend school before/after the appointment in order to be present and marked in the register for at least half of the day.
- To liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause lateness or absence.

Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted after 9:30am in order to ascertain that the child is safe and to determine the reason for absence.

Different reasons for absence: Illness/Medical absences

We know that children will be ill from time to time. Please keep your child at home and let us know if he/she has a temperature or contagious illness. Specific advice for different conditions can be found by clicking on the following link:

If a child is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request medical evidence before authorising further absences. This can take the form of a GP appointment card, a consultant letter, a copy of a prescription etc. This school will automatically request medical evidence for any illness absence taken immediately before or after a school holiday.

Absence for Holidays

Parents/carers are expected to take their children on holiday during the school holidays to minimise the impact of missing education.

If there are exceptional circumstances, parents/carers must complete a leave of absence request form in advance of booking the trip. These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Headteacher, who will use discretion whilst applying government recommendations.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To obtain a leave of absence form from the school office or downloading from the website
- To complete and submit the form in advance of booking the trip.

If parents/carers decide to take a holiday without the authorisation of the Headteacher, the child's absences will be marked as unauthorised. **Fixed Penalty Notices may be issued by the Education Welfare Service for unauthorised holiday absence during term time.**

Absence for Other Reasons

Absences for reasons such as religious observance (up to 2 days per year) or close family bereavement *may* be authorised by the Headteacher. These requests must be discussed with the school. Absences for close family members' weddings or funerals will usually be limited to one day's authorised absence, if granted.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To inform the office, in writing, of the need for leave in circumstances which are known in advance.
- To inform the school as soon as possible when sudden circumstances occur which prevent a family bringing a child to school, so that the appropriate code can be recorded in the register.

Unexplained Absence

When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason is given, the parent/carers will be investigated and may be liable for prosecution and/or a fine from the Local Authority. Regular monitoring of the attendance of all pupils is carried out by the school. Parents/ carers of children who have repeated unauthorised absences-holidays or otherwise, will be contacted and may be invited in to an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any appropriate support to reduce absence.

Role of the School in promoting attendance and punctuality

- To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.
- To promote good attendance, positive attitudes and enjoyment of school for all pupils
- To investigate lateness which exceeds more than 5%.

- To investigate any unexplained absence which exceeds more than 5 consecutive days.
- To investigate absence which exceeds more than 10%, and to hold meetings with these parents as required.
- To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Welfare Officer.
- To report accurate whole school and individual attendance data when required.

Poor Punctuality:

Parents/carers should note that children who arrive after 9:20am are given a 'U' code, which is the equivalent of an unauthorised absence and this will affect the child's attendance figures. School will endeavour to support parents/carers to improve punctuality and may refer to other agencies to this end. Fixed penalty notices may be issued to parents/carers whose children persistently arrive after this time.

Poor Attendance:

Pupils with attendance levels dropping below 90% are defined by the Government as Persistent Absentees. School will endeavour to support parents/carers to improve attendance and may refer to other agencies to this end. For cases of persistent absenteeism, if we are unable to gain an improvement in attendance, or in cases of unauthorised absence due to term time holiday, we may refer to the Wirral Education Social Welfare service who has the following statutory responsibilities:

- prosecuting parents who fail in their legal responsibilities, under the Education Act 1996 Section 444, to ensure their child attends school regularly
- perusing applications for Education Supervision Orders and School Attendance Orders
- issuing warning letters and Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) to parents in relation to unauthorised absence from school and unauthorised holidays in term time in accordance with the locally agreed protocol. Click:-
<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/schools%20and%20learning/education%20social%20welfare%20strategy/Education%20Penalty%20Notice%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20July%202018.pdf>
- tracking children missing from education- we will report a child as missing from education after 2 weeks absence without contact or explanation from parents /carers. If we have reason to be concerned for the safety of a child not in school, we will contact Social Care for advice or, in an emergency, the Police. Click:
<https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures/6-8-children-risk-not-receiving-suitable-education/>

Reporting to Parents

We ensure that all families receive reports on their child's attendance at parents' evenings and in their annual reports. If you find any inaccuracies please let us know. Parents can also request an absence report at any time by contacting the school office in writing.

Application for Leave During Term Time: Parents/Carers must ask permission for their child to be absent during term time, and it is at the Headteacher's discretion to decide whether or not the absence will be authorised. The Headteacher may authorise leave during term time for *exceptional circumstances only*. If leave is taken without permission, or no application is made, parents/carers risk being issued with an Education Penalty Notice. Parents/Carers wishing to apply for their child to have leave of absence from school should complete this form and return it to school for authorisation at least two weeks before the proposed leave.

PARENT'S/CARER'S SECTION

Surname of child		First name	
Date of birth		Year	Class
Full name of parent (1)			
Address of parent (1)			
Postcode		Telephone No.	
Full name of parent (2)		Telephone No.	
Address of parent (2)			
Do you consider this request to be due to exceptional circumstances? If so, please outline the reasons why			
Departure and return date			
Would your child miss any national tests or examinations?			Yes / No
Has she/he had leave during term-time in the last 12 months? (If so, please give dates, reasons, and number of school days leave)			Yes / No
Are there any other siblings? If yes please state their name and the school they attend			Yes / No
Parent/Carer signature		Date	

SCHOOL SECTION

Holiday in Term Time	(i) approved _____ school days	(ii) not approved _____ school days
Reasons		
Date discussed with parent/ carer and/or date informed of approval/ non-approval		
Headteacher's signature		Date

