

Willow Tree Primary School – Attendance Policy

Rationale

Willow Tree Primary School is committed to the principles stated in our Attendance Policy. We believe that all pupils benefit from the education we provide and to which they are entitled to by law. In order to secure regular attendance, we will take appropriate action to ensure that all pupils achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any problems, which may impede full attendance, are acted on as quickly as possible. We will endeavour to work alongside parents, the local community and the Education Welfare Officer. Our Attendance and Punctuality Policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their children's attendance at school as required by law (ref Section 7, 1996 Education Act).

Expectations

Willow Tree Primary has an attendance target of 96%. We aim to maintain a pattern of monitoring attendance and punctuality that ensures consistency throughout our school by promoting the following strategies:

- Maintaining a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
- Keeping accurate records.
- Involving all staff by providing clear guidelines for staff on the registration process, accurate use of codes and follow up due to absence.
- Informing parents/carers of their legal responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring clear information is regularly communicated to parents/carers in a variety of ways.
- Raising awareness by weekly publication of figures in a weekly newsflash.
- Raising awareness of attendance issues to individual parents when their child's attendance becomes a cause for concern.
- Registers of all pupils are completed electronically by the class teacher or teaching assistant at 9.00am and 1pm/1.30pm
- Children who are absent or late will be noted.

Late arrivals

- They must report to the Reception with an adult to register their name, class, time of arrival and the reason for being late on the Inventory.
- Designated Teaching Assistant- Mrs Scott, will meet late children and parents, parents must wait with their child for a learning mentor to take them to class at 10 minute intervals 9.10am, 9.20am, 9.30am

- If a child arrives after 9.15am they will be marked as unauthorised on the register.
- If a child has 3 lates recorded in a week, parents/carers will be initially spoken to by the class teacher, if there is no improvement a warning letter will be issued. If there is still no improvement in punctuality a meeting will be arranged between the parent/carer, the Attendance Co-ordinator and the EWO.
- Wherever possible we will assist parents in enabling their child to arrive at school on time by offering support e.g. the walking bus, breakfast club.
- Lates will be monitored each week and reasons from Inventory checked.
- Lates per class will be included weekly in a weekly newsflash.

Attendance

Attendance figures will be published in the Governors' Annual Report to parents.

We encourage attendance by:

- Having consistent, clear communication with parents and pupils about the importance of regular, prompt, attendance.
- Rag letters – red, amber, green will be sent to all parents half-termly for attendance below 96%.
- We reward good attendance in school every week in assembly by awarding Certificates to classes (Key Stage 1 & 2) In KS2 the classes with the highest attendance are allowed an extra session on the playpark.
- Attendance figures will be included in weekly newsflash which is emailed to parents, it is displayed on a noticeboard in school and uploaded onto the school website
- 100% attendance for a class – own clothes day
- Whole school 96% attendance per half term – whole school reward.
- Punctuality – each year group to arrange an activity or extra playtime each term.
- Prizes for all 100% attenders each term in full School Assembly.
- Parents' termly raffle - hamper draw for 100% attenders.

Willow Tree Primary School will respond to non-attendance in the following ways:

- The Attendance Coordinator, Learning Mentor and a designated member of the Admin staff will monitor any attendance under the school target of 96%. Letters will be issued to parents.
- Contacting parents on the first day of absence if no reason has been received. (Contact will be by text and telephone)
- Registers close at 9.30am, following a checking procedure in every class, a text message is sent.
- If there is no response to the 1st text contact, a second text message will be sent
- If there is no response to the 2nd text contact, a phone call will be made about the unexplained absence.
- If there is no reply to the phone call on the second day a letter will be sent or a home visit made.

- Where a pattern of non-attendance is emerging, the parent/carer is invited to visit school to work with school staff to help resolve the difficulties.
- If attendance does not improve, the Attendance Coordinator will arrange a meeting to discuss the pupils' record. Reports from class teachers will be available in order to discuss the pupils' attitude to learning and progress.
- If parents do not reply to our texts, telephone calls or letters, and if the pupil is still absent from school, we will ask the parent/s to attend an Attendance Panel in school. We will still look at ways we can make things better. We will use written and/or verbal agreements and we will write down an Action Plan for everyone to follow.
- EWO to make truancy visits half termly
- Attendance drops below 90% then parents/carers will be invited to Attendance Panel by EWO.
- Where there is no response to school intervention and where the absence or pattern of absence has persisted without explanation the school can refer to the Education Welfare Service, once the pattern of absence meets the service referral criteria
- **If we do not see any improvement, we may use legal interventions to help us change the poor attendance by requesting Fixed Penalty Fines or fast track to prosecution.**

Absence from School

- If attendance deteriorates, school should consider unauthorised absence.
- From October 2016 more than ten sessions of illness (5 full days) must be supported by medical evidence, otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If a child has 10 unauthorised absences parents or carers may incur a fixed penalty notice.
- If an absence has not been authorised by the Head Teacher and parents or carers remove their child from school, their child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the class register.
- Parents and carers will be actively discouraged from taking holidays in term time and from **September 2016** no holidays during term time will be authorised **except in exceptional circumstances.**
- Parents do not have the right to remove their children from school during term-time. The Head Teacher will decide whether an absence should be authorised. Head Teachers will only authorise absence in term-time when there are **exceptional reasons for a child to miss school and attendance is over 96%.**
- Absence for religious observance may be agreed by the Head Teacher but will not exceed 2 days in any school year.
- Attendance Day - Meetings are arranged with EWO for absence concerns of an identified cohort, as a result of this meeting, a child may be referred to the Educational Welfare Service.
- Parents or carers who take their children out of school without permission will be issued with a fixed term penalty of up to £60 and face possible prosecution in court.

Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

- Every child of compulsory school age is entitled to receive full- time education that is suitable to their individual age, ability and aptitude and any special needs they have.

Of Parents/Carers:

- Endeavour to keep health appointments out of school hours when possible.
- Inform a member of staff of any reason or problem that may hinder their child from attending school.
- Fulfil their legal responsibilities and ensure their child/ren attends school.
- Contact school, before 9.30 am every day, whenever their child is unable to attend school, and send in a letter confirming dates of absence and the reason for absence when their child returns to school.
- If a child is still absent after 3 days, a follow up phone call will be made.
- Seek permission from the school for any leave of absence. The Head Teacher has the right to refuse any leave of absence except in exceptional circumstances.

Of the Local Authority:

- According to the Education Act of 1996, the LEA has to offer educational provision for all school age children through it's school and Education Welfare Service.
- Willow Tree Primary must keep an attendance register at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions and report pupils who fail to attend regularly.
- The Education Welfare Service has the role of assisting the LEA to meet the statutory obligations on school attendance.

Procedures – Roles and responsibilities

- Taking the register is the responsibility of the class teacher.
- A member of the Admin staff will check the registers twice a day and a print of each class register is made.
- The weekly school newsflash publishes attendance figures with regular reminders of the importance of attendance included.
- We promote a multidisciplinary approach and work closely with a number of support services, for example we hold panel meetings for persistent absentees and involve the health team where necessary
- Attendance figures are also given to parents of Nursery children; these are closely monitored. As children approach compulsory school age a letter is sent to parents reminding them of the importance and legal expectation of regular attendance.

Panel

- Invites should be sent by the Education Welfare Officer
- Where possible the panel should consist of Head Teacher, Learning Mentor and School Health Adviser.

- Letter should indicate purpose of the meeting. Supportive not punitive.
- Panel meeting should identify issues preventing regular attendance.
- Actions should be recorded either as a parenting contract or individual attendance plan, whichever is most appropriate.
- Achievable targets need to be considered individually.
- Review after 6 weeks, dates need to be agreed at the end of the meeting.
- If it is considered issues have been resolved there is no need to set a review date, but attendance needs to be monitored by school.
- When additional needs are identified this needs to be referred to the appropriate agency. (School Nurse, CAF, EWO)

Outcome

- Improved attendance – monitored by school
- No improvement – review actions.
- Review dates need to be included when appropriate.
- A second meeting will be arranged if it is necessary.
- Attendance panel meeting must be recorded either as a parenting contract or individual attendance plan.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Willow Tree Primary will evaluate the effectiveness of its strategies termly.
- The Senior Leadership Team are involved in monitoring and evaluation.
- All interventions need to be recorded on an individual basis.