

# Wimborne Primary School

## Attendance Policy



Approved by: Carina Jacobs	Date: Summer 2023
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## 1. Rationale

At Wimborne Primary School we recognise that for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including educational attainment and progress, wellbeing and wider life chances, good attendance at school is essential. Children who attend school regularly have better relationships and more consistent learning, thus they achieve more highly, making better progress and can develop higher self-confidence and esteem. The link between good attendance, standards of behaviour and attainment is clear.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special education need they may have. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional duty to ensure that their child attends that school regularly and on time.

Our school has a strong relationship with families, and we are committed to working in partnership to support parents and children who may experience any barriers to school attendance.

Therefore, ensuring good attendance and improving attendance is everyone's business.

Wimborne Primary School fully supports Portsmouth City Council and the Portsmouth Education Partnership with the 'Miss School Miss Out' campaign.

## 2. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to regular good school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos, and relational practice, that values education and the life chances it enables, including:

- Promoting the benefits that school attendance and education brings
- Working collaboratively to maximise school attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Listening to and understanding any barriers that families may face
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure children and young people have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending school and lessons.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### Parents and carers

- Make sure their child attends school every day/timetabled session and on time
- Inform the school of any absence before **9am** on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return

- Provide the school with more than 1 contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, medical or other non-urgent appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Support the school with their child aiming for 100% attendance every school year
- Discuss with Headteacher any potential planned absences to see if these can be avoided wherever possible

### **Class teachers**

- Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance accurately daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office as soon as possible for the morning and afternoon registers.
- Meet and greet children at the classroom door
- Promote and reward good/improved attendance with pupils at all opportunities
- Liaise with the Attendance Officer on matters of attendance and punctuality
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence with the Attendance Officer/Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Support pupils after any absence to engage with their learning when they are back in school

### **School admin/office staff**

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Check absence messages on Studybugs
- Transfer calls from parents to the Pastoral and Family Support Worker in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Ensure that pupils are accurately signed in/out during the school day
- Follow school attendance procedures – see appendix 1.

### **The attendance officer**

- Check that registers match the absence information
- Monitor and analyse attendance data on at least a weekly basis
- Follow-up any non-attendance that is not accounted for
- Benchmark attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Provide regular attendance reports to school staff and report concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Work with local authority staff and the Portsmouth Education Partnership to tackle and improve persistent absence
- Advise the headteacher when to consider referral for fixed-penalty notices
- The attendance officer is the Office Manager and Pastoral and Family support worker.
- Follow school attendance procedures- see appendix 1

### **Headteacher/The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

- Ensure implementation of this policy at the school
- Take the lead for attendance across the school
- Offer a clear vision to drive attendance improvement
- Evaluate and monitor attendance expectations and processes
- Have an oversight of data analysis

- Monitor and report attendance information to Governors
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Deliver targeted intervention and support to children and families
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Headteacher and can be contacted via [head@wimborne.portsmouth.sch.uk](mailto:head@wimborne.portsmouth.sch.uk)
- Support school staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Make referrals for the issuing of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Support the work of the Portsmouth Education partnership Behaviour and Attendance Group

### **The Governing Board**

- Set high expectations for all leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Promote the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review and challenge attendance data
- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school and groups of pupils
- Have oversight of staff training on attendance to ensure that it is regular and rigorous
- Hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- The safeguarding link governor is also our link governor for attendance

## **4. Attendance expectations and procedures**

### **4.1 The attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

Present / Attending an approved off-site educational activity / Absent / Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

- Pupils must arrive in school by 8:55am on each school day
- The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9:15 a.m.
- The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00.p.m. and will be kept open until 1:15 p.m.
- The school day finishes at 3:20 p.m. (EYFS and KS1) and 3:25 p.m. for KS2

The attendance register is a legal document and may be used in evidence in cases of prosecution for non-attendance.

### **4.2 Planned absence**

Parents may not authorise absence, only schools can do this. Attending a medical or emergency dental appointment will be counted as an authorised absence as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we

encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time planned absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. As Headteachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is highly unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. Go to section 5 to find out examples of which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Parents can request a leave of absence by completing a leave of absence form available from the school office and on the website. The request will only be approved by the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances after they have considered the effect on the continuity of the child's education and his/her overall attendance. All requests need to be received at least 5 days before leave is required.

### **4.3 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00 a.m. or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this. If the school feels a child has too many absences, due to illness, we will inform parents that future absences may not be authorised without additional medical evidence.

Some pupils, such as those with long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, may face greater barriers to attendance than others. We will work with parents to still share high expectations for school attendance but also to offer additional support and make reasonable adjustments where necessary.

Extended absence abroad in term time will only be authorised in extenuating circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher. Children taken off roll need to reapply.

### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

If a pupil arrives late after the register has closed for a session, the appropriate code applies to the whole of that session. If a child is regularly late for school, teachers and administrative staff should inform the Headteacher. The Headteacher will monitor lateness and will arrange for the Pastoral, Family Support Worker to contact parents to address the problem.

#### **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Whilst the Headteacher is the only person in school who can authorise absence it is recognised that other members of staff also play a vital role in following up absence.

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

1. Contact the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit to check on the pupils welfare
2. Identify whether the absence is approved or not
3. Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session- see appendix 2
4. Contact the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken. If absence continues, the school will take further advice e.g. contacting the local authority School Attendance Team, MASH.
5. For pupils in Y6 a home visit will be undertaken if no reason for absence is given and we are unable to contact the parents. This is to ensure their safety as Y6 children are able to walk to school without an adult.
6. For any pupils with absences of 3 days or over a home visit may also be undertaken

Notes, records of telephone calls and medical certificates will be placed in the register by class teachers and then kept in individual pupil's files. School will also monitor the attendance of all pupils and work within the framework of the Escalation document. The School identifies children at risk of becoming persistent absentees (PAs) and will offer support to parents as appropriate.

#### **4.6 Reporting to parents**

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through half termly RAG letters.

#### **4.7 Part-time timetables**

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.

A part-time timetable will always be in place for the shortest time necessary and not treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time, either

at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents.

The local authority must be notified of any part-time timetables and the plan for return to full time education. They should never be open-ended. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat this absence as authorised.

#### **4.8 Alternative provision**

Any pupils who attend alternative provision are dual registered but remain the responsibility of the school. We will regularly check the attendance, behaviour and progress of dual registered pupils and raise any concerns about absence with the alternative provision and/or parents as necessary, in line with our safeguarding responsibilities.

### **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year. The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. **A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.**

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 5 days before the absence, and in accordance with any **leave of absence request form** (LOAF), accessible via the school office or downloadable from our school website. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. If no explanation is received absences cannot be authorised.

There are two main categories of absences:

**Authorised absence:** when the school has accepted the explanation offered as a satisfactory reason for the absence, or approval has been given in advance. For example:

- Illness/sickness, medical appointment (medical evidence of appointment required), attending a funeral
- Religious circumstances (where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong)
- Participation in sporting competition, artistic performance, or examination
- Circumstance linked to parent in HM Armed Forces (MOD advice)
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes

**Unauthorised absence:** when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school following a parental request. This includes:

- parents giving their children permission to be absent from school e.g. shopping for uniform, birthdays, visiting other family members
- absences which have not been explained or a satisfactory explanation received
- hairdressing appointments or non-emergency dentist appointments
- a child's parent being ill or a parent's desire for company or indulging a child who wants to stay home.

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information has been presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents. An example of this would be where a parent states a child has been unwell but on return to school there is compelling evidence that they have been on a family holiday.

If a child has more than 5 days (10 sessions) unauthorised absence in a term, then the matter will be referred to the local authority School Attendance Team for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice fine.

### **Escalation of procedures**

The School Attendance Team will become involved when:

- Parents have taken their child on an unauthorised holiday.
- School has written to the parents explaining concerns over level of attendance/ unauthorised absence using the appropriate letters.
- Pupils have 10 consecutive sessions unauthorised absence in any term this may lead to a SAP (school attendance panel).
- Have 10 unauthorised lates or a combination of unauthorised sessions and unauthorised lates.

### **Suspected Changes of address**

When it is suspected that a family has moved away from the area without notifying the school, and the school and the Children Missing Education Officer (CMEO) are unable, after reasonable enquiry, to locate the child, the child should be removed from the school roll after a period of 4 weeks and their name will be placed on the school to school (S2S) for missing children. The period from when the child stopped attending the school until removed from roll should not count against unauthorised absence returns. School will make a referral to CME- Child missing in education.

### **Legal sanctions**

The school through the local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without authorisation
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- If the payment has not made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.



## 6. Strategies for promoting good attendance

Our aim is to encourage families to ensure children regularly attend school. Class teachers constantly praise children for good attendance and this will also be highlighted in assemblies. The attendance cup will be awarded weekly to the class with the best attendance each week. Attendance will also be celebrated on the attendance board in the school hall.

Letters are sent home to parents half-termly congratulating them on their child's attendance for that half term.

At Wimborne we believe good attendance is vital for our children to gain the maximum from their time in school. We aim to work collaboratively with all involved parties for the benefit of all of our children. At any time the school may reward good attendance in other ways and may hold specific attendance drives to promote good attendance at school. These will always be clearly communicated to children and parents.

### **We support families by:**

- Providing information on the school website regarding absence related to illnesses
- Encouraging families to contact the Attendance Officer or Headteacher to listen to, understand and discuss any barriers, worries or concerns
- Recognising there are other factors affecting children's attendance such as poor sleep, change in family circumstances, ongoing medical conditions etc.
- Providing access to Senco, Mental Health Support Team, Parenting Surgeries, Family Early Support, school nursing team, other agencies
- Engaging in city-wide priorities and initiatives such as the Portsmouth Education Partnership Education strategy and relational practice work

### **We promote good attendance at our school by:**

- Ensuring that good attendance is everyone's business
- Incentives to encourage good attendance, such as attendance cup, reward of extra break time.
- Aiming for 100% attendance and setting aspirational targets at a whole-school, year group, class and individual level
- Celebrating improved attendance
- Regular updates for parents in newsletters and the school's channels of communication such as our school facebook page and school jotter app.

## 7. Attendance data and monitoring

### **7.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

- Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

## 7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these

## 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies

## 7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

**Persistent absence** is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and **severe absence** is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

## 8. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the DfE [working together to improve school attendance](#) (May 2022), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 9. Links with other policies/documentation

This policy specifically links to the following policy and/or documents:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour and relationships policy
- DfE [School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities](#) (May 2022)
- DfE [Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities](#) (May 2022)
- DfE [Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities](#) (Published May 2022, Applies from Sept 2023)
- PCC [Children Missing Education \(CME\)](#) (Sept 2016)
- DfE [Keeping Children safe in Education](#) (Sept 2022)
- [Ofsted School Inspection handbook](#) (Sept 2022)

## 10. Policy monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board.

## Appendix 1: **Attendance procedures**

1. Listen to messages on answer phone:- 'Day Message' + 'Night Message' + 'Absence Message'
2. Enter Absences into Absence Book
3. Check office emails for Absence Messages and add to Arbor.
4. Check Studybugs Messages and ensure they have transferred to Arbor.
5. Enter all absences into Studybugs from Absence Book
6. Enter all Lates from Inentry into Arbor
7. Check in Studybugs Registers for any Unexplained Absences
8. Enter any Unexplained Absences into Unexplained Absence Book
9. Double check with class any Unexplained Absences
10. Text parents of Unexplained Absences for YR-Y5
11. Phone parents of Unexplained Absences for Y6  
YR-Y5 with no response  
Hit List children
12. Discuss Absences with Family Pastoral Support Worker (FPSW)
  - Y6 absent no contact
  - 3 day absences
  - Hit List Children
13. FPSW to phone/home visit any absences from No.12
14. During the day add any child arrivals or leavers into Arbor with times and details etc. from Inentry

### **END OF WEEK**

Send out 'N' Letters – Follow up with 'O' Letter the following week

Print out Comments Report for Headteacher

FPSW to check absence of Hit List Children and Studybugs Children fallen below 90% and 96%

FPSW to check whether genuine illness or what reasons have been given and decide what letter if applicable to send home.

FPSW & Headteacher discuss attendance concerns at 2:45 p.m. on Fridays

FPSW to liaise with Attendance Officer to send out 7a letters for about 3 'O's

FPSW/Headteacher to liaise with Attendance Officer re: Attendance Letters to send out

FPSW to update attendance spreadsheets

### **HALF-TERM**

Compile and save RAG Letter Reports – Give to Headteacher

Print Late List for 5 or more since September – Give to Headteacher

Print Late Inventory Report for the Half-Term – Give to Headteacher

CJ to check RAG Letter Reports and adjust if needed – Give to Attendance Officer

Run Vulnerable Group Reports and Print Out – Give to Headteacher

Print all RAG Letters and distribute to class on last day

Print all Late Letters and distribute to class on last day

## Appendix 2: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/Dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day