



# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

## Whitefriars School

**Effective from:** May 2022

**Reviewed on:** May 2022

**Next Review Due:** May 2023

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

School Attendance: Department for Education (October 2014)

## 1. Introduction



### Article 28 : Your RIGHT to LEARN and to go to school

Whitefriars School expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved. At Whitefriars School, we are continuously working towards our goal of 100% attendance for all pupils.

## 2. Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication about the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them

## 3. Rights and responsibilities



### Article 3: Everyone who works with children should always do what is best for each child.

#### 3.1 The Legal Framework:

There are legal obligations on:

- The parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on the register
- The School to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school
- The Local Authority to provide education and to enforce attendance

### **3.2 Headteacher:**

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with School policies and procedures

### **3.3 Attendance Officer (and Attendance Team)**

- To take responsibility for attendance/punctuality on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquires
- To carry out and record the outcome of first day of absence calls, when a child doesn't arrive at school when no reason has been received
- To record reasons for absence on SIMS
- To implement the daily checking of SIMS registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions
- To maintain SIMS attendance records in line with this policy
- To meet with the DSL to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality
- In conjunction with the DSL to liaise with the local authority and make referrals where necessary
- In conjunction with the DSL to revise and amend the policy, as required
- To monitor weekly attendance data for classes
- To produce weekly /termly/yearly data from SIMS for the DSL to analyse
- To promptly inform the DSL if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality
- To oversee and coordinate the work with families with poor attendance and punctuality, putting measures in place to help improve this.
- To maintain clear communication with the staff regarding attendance and punctuality within their classes
- To support the DSL with the promotion of good attendance and punctuality
- To report any instances of home-education and children moving abroad to the Local Authority
- In conjunction with the DSL to follow the LA Attendance System and liaise with the Court officer
- To work with the Data Manager to report attendance in the termly census
- To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy
- To keep parents informed of school procedures regarding attendance and punctuality.
- To work with the Pupil Administrator to oversee the admission of new pupils
- To work with the Heads of Year and Phase Leaders to oversee the induction of new pupils

### **3.4 Designated Safeguarding Lead**

- To oversee the analysis of weekly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings
- In conjunction with the Attendance Officer to liaise with the local authority and make referrals where necessary
- To work with Heads of Year, Phase Leaders, form tutors and class teachers to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.

- In conjunction with the Attendance Officer to revise and amend the policy, as required.
- To organise meetings with outside agencies and parents of children with poor attendance and punctuality to put measures in place to support attendance and punctuality
- In conjunction with the Attendance Officer to follow the LA Attendance System and liaise with the Court officer
- To keep parents informed of school procedures regarding attendance and punctuality.

### **3.5 Teachers and Classroom Staff**

- To keep accurate and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance through the SIMS register system
- To take a formal register of all pupils twice a day. This is done on the school's SIMS system. To save these registers by the required times.
- To take a lesson attendance register every lesson (secondary section teachers)
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance
- To provide a welcoming and safe environment which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children
- To establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs
- This could include pre-warning phonecalls to parents and carers that their child's attendance has fallen below 90% and that they are at risk of a warning letter. Teachers make these phonecalls in the secondary section and Phase Leaders and class teachers make these phonecalls in the primary section.
- To liaise with the DSL regarding any attendance concerns
- To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings

### **3.6 Heads of Year, Phase Leaders, Senior Leadership Team and Inclusion Support Workers**

- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used effectively and having the desired impact
- Under the guidance of the Attendance Officer, to work with families with poor attendance and punctuality, putting measures in place to help improve this.
- This could include the use of an attendance contract. Heads of Year lead on this in the Secondary Section and the Inclusion Support Workers lead on this in the primary section.
- To support the DSL with the promotion of good attendance and punctuality
- To induct new pupils

### **3.7 Parents**

If a child is absent from school for any reason parents should telephone the School Office as soon as possible to report the reason for this absence. If the child is arriving late at school for any reason, parents and carers should let the office know, preferably the day before. Medical appointments should be confirmed with an appointment card or letter. If a

child is absent for 5 or more school days then medical evidence is required. Parents and carers should try to schedule appointments out of school hours if at all possible

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the published equipment required for lessons
- Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible
- Telephone to inform the school on the first day of absence for their child.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child. This includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life which may impact on learning

### **3.8 The Local Authority**

The LA through the Attendance Team is expected to:

- Support the school in improving attendance through whole school initiatives and individual pupil interventions
- Work with families and other agencies to remove barriers to good attendance
- Ensure that parents are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance
- Uphold and enforce the law in respect of attendance, child employment and involvement in entertainment and child protection

## **4. Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance**



**Article 29:** [Your right to become the best you can be.](#)

We aim to ensure that good attendance (above 95%) and punctuality is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across school.

### **4.1 Breakfast Club**

The school offers a daily Breakfast Club for primary section pupils. This supports parents and carers by allowing them to drop their children off from 7:45am, ensuring they are on time for school. Breakfast is offered for vulnerable secondary section pupils to support families with their child's attendance.

### **4.2 School Newsletter**

The school newsletter is regularly used to highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

### **4.3 Staff Promoting Good Attendance**

Form tutors and class teachers regularly promote good attendance with their classes. Good class attendance is also attributed to good teaching. High levels of attendance are celebrated. Form tutors and class teachers regularly teach their pupils about the importance and benefits of good attendance. Regular values assemblies focus on how attendance helps the fostering of our school values.

#### **4.5 Parents' Evenings**

These provide an opportunity for form tutors and class teachers to praise and recognise excellent attendance or share concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance.

#### **4.6 Attendance Rewards**

Certificates are regularly given to classes with the highest attendance and punctuality. This also fosters healthy competition between year groups to improve attendance and engages form tutors and class teachers in conversation with their classes about attendance. Pupils with excellent attendance are invited to regular attendance celebration events. This includes hot chocolate and pancake breakfast events.

#### **4.7 Emails**

Parents and carers of children who arrive late (after 8.45am) are sent a message to remind them of the importance of arriving on time. These emails also offer help if parents and carers need further support.

#### **4.8 The School Learning Environment**

A welcoming, organised learning environment, that supports and celebrates its learners is recognised as a key factor in ensuring that pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. All staff ensure that their learning environments are of a high quality. Regular environmental audits are carried out by SLT to ensure this.

#### **4.9 Coffee mornings**

The school holds regular coffee mornings with parents and carers about the importance of good attendance and how to ensure this. These mornings also help support families who are experiencing difficulties.

### **5. Monitoring and recording attendance & punctuality and associated actions**

#### **5.1 Class Registers**

Class registers are recorded using SIMS. Registers are the method of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session (usually form tutors and class teachers). Registers must be accurate and submitted at the published times. An AM register and a PM register is taken for the whole school. Secondary section teachers take a register every lesson.

#### **5.2 Morning Register**

Children must be in their form rooms and classrooms by 8.45am. Registers remain open until 9.00am. At that point, the teacher must submit their final register and click 'save' on SIMS. At 8.55am the school gates are closed. Children arriving between 8.45am and 9.20am are recorded as 'L' in the register. Children arriving after 9:20am are recorded as 'U' (late after

register closed) in the register. The office staff check that the children who arrive after 8.55am have been marked in the registers.

### **5.3 Afternoon Register**

Primary section registers must be completed and submitted by class teachers straight after lunch and before afternoon teaching commences. The final deadline for primary section registers is 1.00pm. For the secondary section, the Period 6 registers are the PM registers. The final deadline for secondary section registers is 2.15pm.

### **5.4 Monitoring First Day Absence**

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, a first day absence call will be made:

- Phone parents' contact number(s).
- Phone emergency contact number(s) to get an up-to-date contact number for the parent/carer and update the school system accordingly.
- Speak to the parents/ carer face-to-face or by phone the next day and establish reasons for absence and update contact numbers.
- The parent/carer is asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. The Attendance Team must establish a reason for every absence.

### **5.5 Home visits**

Staff may visit a family if we have not heard from them on the third day of school absence. Staff may also make home visits where there are other attendance concerns.

### **5.6 AIM process**

The school follows the AIM (Attendance Intervention Model for irregular attendance) in conjunction with the local authority and as per the guidelines set out by Harrow Council Education Services. [Click here](#) for more information. These systems and structures are followed to improve attendance for identified individuals. This includes the sending out of warning letters, to communicate with parents and carers about attendance and punctuality, including where attendance is below 90%. The DSL informs Childrens' Services where a pupil has been absent for ten days without any notification (child missing in Education).

### **5.7 Deputy Headteacher attendance monitoring**

The Attendance Officer communicates daily attendance figures (by year group) to the Deputy Headteachers. This helps inform strategies to improve attendance for groups.

### **5.8 DSL attendance monitoring**

The DSL monitors individuals, classes, year groups, different ethnic groups, SEN and FSM pupils. They identify patterns and trends in absence/punctuality, including persistent absence. This helps to inform strategies to improve attendance for individuals and groups.

## 6. Punctuality

Pupils are required to be in their classrooms by 8.45am and are marked as late (L) if they arrive after this time. The school gates close at 8.55am. Pupils who arrive after 8.55am report to Reception and sign into the late book. This is the Whitefriars Avenue entrance for the primary section and the Tudor Road entrance for the secondary section.

Emails are sent daily to parents and carers whose children arrive at school late (after 8.45am).

Secondary section pupils who are late to school (after 8.45am) complete a punctuality workshop after school on the same day. Parents receive an email notification and a notification via the SIMS parent app.

Parents and carers whose child is regularly late for school will be contacted for a meeting by the form tutor/class teacher or Head of Year/Phase Leader who will work with the parent/carer to bring about an improvement in punctuality. The attendance officer will provide the required information to the Head of Year/Phase Leader.

If punctuality does not improve, parents and carers are invited into school to discuss concerns with the DSL and/or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Where lateness is persistent outside agencies may also be utilised to provide additional specific provision to support improvement.

## 7. Exceptional Circumstances



### Article 28: Your right to learn and go to school.

In line with The Dfe guidance, and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, leave for pupils during term time is authorised by the headteacher due to exceptional circumstances only. It is not a parental right to take leave during term time. Parents must make a request for leave during term time giving the exceptional circumstances for the request and it is at the headteacher's discretion to determine whether that request should be granted.

Examples of exceptional circumstances could include:

- Death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- Life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil

Any parent requiring an absence for their child for an exceptional reason should complete the application for exceptional leave of absence. Where possible this should be at least two weeks prior to the time they wish to have leave.

Please note, holidays during term time will not be authorised and could result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.

## 8. Penalty Notices

Schools can request for penalty notices to be issued to families due to the level of unauthorised leave where the child is of compulsory school age.

A Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent in respect of each child. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority may prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to their attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error. Section 444(1) Education Act 1996: "If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence." The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority. The issuing of Penalty Notices may be appropriate in the following circumstances:

At least 20 sessions (10 school days) lost to unauthorised absence within a period of no more than 12 weeks (term time).

A leave of absence of at least 10 consecutive sessions (5 school days) not approved by head teacher as exceptional.

In cases where a child persistently arrives at school after the register has closed and has received at least eight (8) unauthorised late marks within a period of ten (10) weeks (term time).

For more information please see:

<https://www.harrow.gov.uk/downloads/file/23603/schoolattendance-and-intervention-model-policy.pdf>

## **9. Related documentation**

- a. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- b. Keeping Children Safe in Education
- c. Special Educational Needs Policy