

# Wye Forest Federation

Redbrook Church of England Primary School  
St Briavels Parochial Church of England Primary School



Name of Policy: Attendance

This policy was agreed by the Full Governing Body on: (and supersedes all previous policies relating to this area)	
Signed by:	(Executive Headteacher)
Signed by:	(WFF Chair of Governors)
Implemented:	16 July 21
Review date:	July 22

## **Christian Visions**

Our federation is a safe space where we embrace and enjoy challenge; take ownership of our own learning; collaborate and support each other whilst striving to be the best we can be in order to flourish in all areas of life now and in the future.

Redbrook: Nurtures Family and is Diverse in Learning.

St Briavels: Embraces Community and Reaches Beyond.

## **Rationale**

All children have a right to learn. At the Wye Forest Federation we expect all pupils to attend every day the school is open unless a reason acceptable to the schools is given and we are able to authorise the absence. Regular attendance and punctuality are important if children are to flourish in school and to take full advantage of the learning opportunities offered by the school. We also recognise that attending school regularly and punctually is vital to the educational process and encourages a good pattern of work for life in the future.

## **The Law**

The law says that:

- Parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that their children receive suitable full time education;
- The parent of any child of compulsory school age has a legal duty to secure the regular attendance of that child at the school where he or she is registered.
- That Local Authorities must ensure that parents fulfil their legal obligations regarding their children's education;
- Maintained schools must allow the LA to inspect their registers
- Schools must report to the LA pupils who fail to attend regularly. Gloucestershire's Penalty Notice protocol allows schools to notify the LA of any pupil having more than 5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence in a ten week period particularly when this absence is on account of:
  - a) Lateness after registration;
  - b) Term time holidays without permission

In these instances the LA will consider issuing a fixed penalty notice of £60 per parent/carers per child. Unauthorised absence may lead to the LA taking full court action if attendance issues cannot be resolved. A written warning will no longer be issued, in the first instance, by the school.

Formal meetings (Attendance Improvement Meetings) will be held with parents whose children's poor attendance may lead to legal proceedings and attendance plans will be drawn up.

## **Responsibilities**

Parents/carers should:

- Make sure their child attends school regularly and on time, appropriately dressed and equipped and in a fit state to learn.
- Let the school know if they are having difficulty with attendance so that any available help or support can be offered.
- Parents must inform the school before 9.30 a.m., on the first day of absence from school, giving reasons why their child is absent and when they are expected to return.
- Where possible seek permission from school prior to any absence.
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time.

Policy reviewed: 16 July 2021

- Notify school if they intend to remove their child permanently from the school for any reason.

School will:

- Make suitable arrangements for the safe, daily arrival of children.
- Be consistent in their attendance practices.
- Keep and mark registers accurately.
- Follow up any unexplained absences.
- Notify parents/carers, at least annually, of their child's attendance level.
- Notify the Local Authority (LA) of pupils who have poor attendance, leave school to be educated at home, go missing, or are excluded.
- Notify the LA and/or the Department for Education of absence figures for the school and, where necessary, individual pupils.

The Head Teacher will:

- Ensure that everybody at school treats attendance as a priority.
- Write to all families whose children come under the category 'persistently absent'
- Promote the importance of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers.
- Be available to discuss attendance concerns with pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- Remind parents at least annually of attendance procedures.
- Carry out attendance meetings either on school site or through home visits.
- Oversee attendance procedures and attendance data.
- Include attendance on all written Head Teacher's reports to Governors

Governors will:

- With the Head Teacher, monitor, evaluate and review the attendance procedures regularly.
- Monitor and challenge the Head Teacher on key groups of pupils whose attendance is below national.
- Report on attendance statistics when required.

### **Registration**

School must keep attendance registers for all pupils on the school roll. The class teacher will call the register twice a day and every pupil will be marked as present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site. It must be shown, by the use of approved codes, whether an absence is authorised or not.

Registration will take place between 8.45 a.m. and 9.00 a.m. for the morning session.

Pupils arriving after registration will be marked late.

Pupils arriving after 9.30 will be marked with an unauthorised absence mark unless there is an acceptable reason for lateness when they will be marked with an authorised absence mark.

Registers will be marked again at 1pm.

Late arrivals or early departures will be monitored by the Executive Head Teacher. If a child arrives after 9.00am, when registration starts or leaves before midday or 3.10pm then they and their parents/carers will report to the office, where a record is kept of the fact and noted, in case of an emergency. This will include the time of arrival / departure, the reason for being late /leaving early.

Absence, legally, has to be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised and reported on to the DfE / LA. Only the schools can decide whether an absence is authorised or not and does not have to accept the reasons given by a parent or carer.

Policy reviewed: 16 July 2021

## **School Procedures**

Registers will be completed one-schools and checked after close of registration.

Where the register shows an unexplained absence and there has been no message received at school by 9.30 a.m. a phone call will be made to the parent/carer to find out the reason for absence and the date of expected return. All telephone messages will be dated and recorded in writing.

If school has been unable to make contact by telephone a written communication will be sent on the 3rd day of absence, requesting the reason for absence. If there is still no response the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where the register shows 5 separate late during or after registration marks over a school half term, school will contact parents.

Where the register shows 10 separate late after registration marks over the last 10 weeks the Local Authority may issue a fixed penalty notice. A written warning will no longer be issued, in the first instance, by the school.

Concerns about attendance or punctuality will be referred to the Head Teacher who will, if necessary, contact parents/carers to try to resolve any issues. If these issues cannot be resolved and there is unauthorised absence the matter may be referred ultimately to the Education Inclusion Team at Shire Hall.

## **Absences**

### **Illness**

It is realised that a child may be absent from school because of genuine illness. In such cases absence will be authorised. However, patterns of frequent or repeated sporadic absence will be followed up by the school initially, with the LA becoming involved as appropriate and when necessary.

### **Medical appointments**

Please try to make appointments outside school hours if at all possible. However, if this is not possible school should be pre-notified and we will ask for copies of appointments cards/letters.

Parents collecting pupils from school mid-session should, for safety reasons, notify the office on departure and re-arrival. If present at registration no amendment to the register is necessary. If absent at registration the register should be marked with an authorised absence mark. Again for safety reasons, pupils should report to the office on arrival.

### **Longer Absences**

Suitable work will be set for pupils who are absent for longer than a week when requested by the parents/carers.

Pupils who have been absent for a long period of time will be positively welcomed back and will be assisted in catching up with missed work. Friendship groups will be monitored for a period to ensure that the pupil is happily settled back into school life

## **Unauthorised Absence**

All absences will be deemed unauthorised until the school decides otherwise, based on the information provided by the parent or carer. This will be monitored by the Executive Head Teacher and where a pattern emerges or concern arises, the school will take progressive steps of action outlined in appendix A.

### **School Closure**

In the event that the school is closed at the Heads discretion, absences will be recorded as authorised. e.g. adverse weather, no running water/heating

### **Holidays in Term Time**

The law (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006) states that parents/carers do not have a right to take their child(ren) out of school for a holiday in term time. The Education (Penalty Notice) Regulations 2007 further strengthen the duty on LAs and schools to address the issue of non-attendance robustly.

For every application made by the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally lives, the Head Teacher has a discretionary power to grant up to five days of absence in a school year for a family holiday if they believe that the circumstances are truly exceptional and warrant it. No parent/carer can demand leave of absence for a holiday as a right.

Head Teachers are permitted to agree "holiday leave" but only in infrequent and exceptional circumstances. Each case, individual requests will be considered sensitively. School holiday request forms must be submitted at least two weeks in advance. Forms are available from the school website or from the school office.

If the parent/carer keeps a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised.

If a holiday request is refused but the holiday is still taken this will be recorded as unauthorised. All unauthorised absence will be examined and the appropriate action will be taken following Government/LA guidelines which can result in a penalty notice being issued to each parent and for each child.

### **Strategies**

To support our attendance policy we:

- Will treat attendance as a priority
- Promote good attendance at every opportunity - at Parents evenings, at Induction, in newsletters, in assemblies, on notice boards etc
- Always use first day telephone contact
- Celebrate good and improved attendance
- Set attendance targets – 100%
- Keep parents/carers informed of their child's attendance level
- Make good use of attendance data by specific analysis
- Notify Governors at each full governing body meeting of attendance levels
- Provide a safe, happy, stimulating environment for children where they feel valued and welcomed and that their presence in school is important

### **Success Criteria**

Policy reviewed: 16 July 2021

- We are meeting or exceeding our attendance targets.
- Our attendance is in line with, or exceeds that of local comparator schools.
- We have positive feedback from outside agencies such as Ofsted, LA etc.
- Everybody is clear about what to do if a child is absent from school.

**Links with other policies:**

Teaching and Learning

Monitoring

Safeguarding

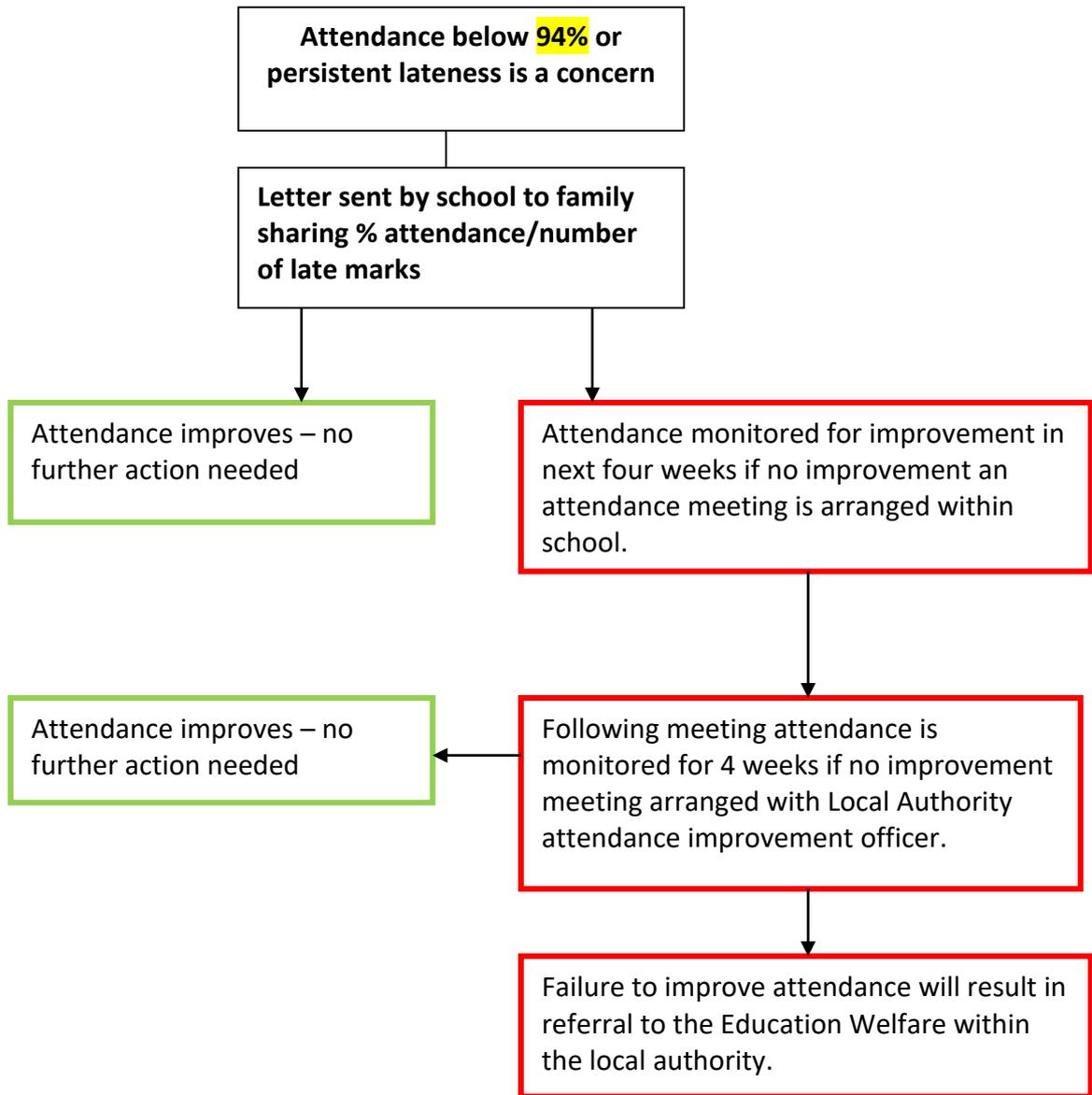
Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions

Pupil Premium

Exclusions

Appendix A

Attendance Meeting Flowchart



## **Attendance Meetings**

When the attendance meeting happens they follow a set agenda:

- Meeting date and time
- Register of people in attendance
- Identification of key reason for absence
- Outcomes wanted and why these outcomes are needed
- How these outcomes will be achieved and the impact of these outcomes on the attendance %.

### **DRAFT INITIAL LETTER PRIOR TO MEETING**

Date

Name and Address of parent

Dear parent

I am writing to advise you that (name of child)'s school attendance is causing concern as it has fallen to (%) and as a result we are becoming concerned that (name) is missing a significant part of learning. I have enclosed a copy of (name)'s attendance record which shows an analysis of attendance and punctuality and whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Regular attendance is extremely important as missing school can have an impact on learning and as I am sure you are aware it is a legal requirement. Good attendance enables students to keep up with the work required.

If there are any particular circumstances that the school may not be aware of which is having an influence on (name) attending school regularly, please do not hesitate to contact me, the class teacher or school office because together we can make a difference.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Helm  
Executive Head Teacher