

WEST DEAN C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Review Information	
Reviewed by	Head Teacher, Locality Heads, Staff and Governors Working Party
Ratified by	Governors Board
Review Frequency	5 Years
Policy Reviewed and Agreed	April 2018
Next Policy Review Due	Summer 2023



West Dean Church of England Primary School

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Chichester Schools



Working Together

Attendance Policy

September 2013

Written by Chichester Locality Headteachers

Rationale

Every child has a right to education and parents/carers are legally responsible for making sure that their child/children, once enrolled at a school, attend/s regularly and punctually. Regular attendance at school is the single most important factor in a child/children making appropriate progress and achieving success. Good, regular and punctual attendance means doing well academically, developing better relationships with other children and encourages positive behaviour. It also sets up good habits for when young people take their next steps.

Principles

We recognise that children's learning is affected by their attendance, so we aim to encourage everyone to aim high and try to achieve their full potential. The school provides a warm, safe, welcoming and caring environment, within which everyone is valued and respected.

All school staff work with parents/carers to help their children attend school punctually every day and to thereby meet the legal requirement that all children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular, full-time basis.

Every half day absence from school has to be classified, and reported by the school, as either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'. Information about absence is **always** required.

'Authorised' absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason, (e.g. illness or educated off-site).

'Unauthorised' absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable (e.g. absences that have not been properly explained, or previously authorised by the Headteacher) or children who arrive too late to receive a mark in the register, without a reasonable explanation.

In order to achieve the best attendance possible, the school works in partnership with the Pupil Entitlement Investigation Service (PEI) where attendance data is submitted by the school on a half termly basis. The Governing Body agrees legally required targets for attendance each year.

Procedures

Attendance registers are taken at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions, and are submitted electronically to the office for checking by 9am. The office staff contact the parents/carers of any child who has an unexplained absence before the end of the session. All absences are treated as unauthorised unless or until the school agrees on a satisfactory explanation. Absence notes are collated by the school office and reasons logged in the Absence Book.

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- Illness and other legitimate reasons

If a child is unfit for school, parents / carers are asked to inform the school on each day of absence before 9.15am. In **exceptional circumstances**, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested, such as a doctor's note. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, day trips, etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency e.g. bereavement.

- Appointments

Parents have a responsibility for ensuring that non-urgent medical and dental appointments are outside of the school day. In exceptional cases, where this is not possible, parents have a responsibility for ensuring that only part and not all of the school day is missed.

- Holiday absence

The school will not authorise holiday in term time for any year group.

- Late arrival

Children who arrive late to school must report to the school office, and the time of arrival noted on the register. Arrival at the school after 8.45am is recorded as an unauthorised absence, unless a reasonable explanation is given.

- Register codes

If a child is absent or late, appropriate codes are entered by the office staff. The Headteacher confirms any disputed codes. The Headteacher and Governing Body will code certain absences eg: education in another establishment/school closed due to bad weather etc.

- Communication with parents

If concerns about attendance or punctuality arise, the school will contact the parents/carers to discuss these and agree how this will be taken forward. A case file may be started, comprising documented phone calls, letters, meetings, agreed actions and review dates.

Monitoring and Reporting

- Electronic records

Attendance of all pupils is recorded electronically using the West Sussex SIMS system. This is up-dated regularly, and used to inform the school of patterns and raise any concerns.

- Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI)

The school works in partnership with the Pupil Entitlement Officer, and seeks their advice on issues and matters arising from pupil absence. The initial responsibility to monitor, investigate and improve individual poor attendance lies with the school, and pupil case files will be kept. A referral to the Pupil Entitlement Officer will be considered if the child's absence is unauthorised for 25 sessions or more - (there are two sessions a day). A "Case Review Checklist", "A6 Referral Form" and a pupil's "Registration Certificate" will form part of this referral.

The attendance advice line (0330222 8200) is available for both parents and schools.

PEI@westsussex.gov.uk for all queries

EWI.AreaA@westsussex.gov.uk for A6 referrals in Area A

FPN.EWS@westsussex.gov.uk for all FPN referrals and / or queries.

- Fixed Penalty Notices

The school, in conjunction with the Local Authority, is able to issue **Fixed Penalty Notices** to parents of pupils who have 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 10-week consecutive period if attendance has been irregular.

- Governing Body

The Governing Body monitor attendance in relation to targets set for the school attendance each year. The attendance policy is agreed or reviewed every three years or whenever significant changes occur.

Children Missing Education (CME)

Schools must liaise with CME if a parent withdraws a child to be home educated. This is also the case should school be unable to establish the whereabouts of a child who has been absent for more than ten days, without contact from the parents. CME guidance is available through school.