

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Wistaston Academy
Primary and Nursery School
Together We Learn • Together We Achieve

Policy Author	Dominique Griffiths, Principal
Responsible Governor's Committee	Quality of Education
Frequency of Review	Review in the light of changes to legislation or operating experience
Website	Yes

We believe that children can reach their full potential only by receiving full-time education, through regular and structured attendance. Wistaston Academy expects all pupils to arrive and leave school punctually and we emphasise this to parents. Arriving late can be embarrassing to the child and they may miss important parts of the curriculum.

All staff are concerned for the children's welfare and happiness and everyone plays a part in promoting regular attendance among the pupils. Good attendance is critical to good progress and attainment and this is underpinned by legislation:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable ... to his age, ability and aptitude, and ... to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Aims

- To foster a climate where regular attendance and punctuality are valued by the school community – teachers, parents and pupils
- To provide a framework, with agreed roles and responsibilities
- To provide support and guidance for parents and pupils
- To develop positive and consistent communication between home and school, including set procedures for attendance information
- To develop a systematic approach for gathering and analysing data
- To improve the overall attendance of pupils at school and reduce unauthorised absence
- To implement a system of rewards and sanctions
- To promote effective partnership with external education consultants and the Education Welfare Service

Communication

Information on punctuality, unauthorised absence and illness is set out on the school website. This emphasises the importance of being at school on time and notifying the school if a child is absent for any reason, preferably by telephone on the morning of the first absence. We ask parents to ring the school on every day of absence thereafter, first thing in the morning before registers close. Where no notification is given, the school will either telephone or send a text to the parent/carer and complete a home visit. After a lengthy illness, or where absence is a concern, we ask parents to send in a doctor's note or letter and evidence that medicines have been prescribed.

Attendance is discussed and explained at the Pre-school Induction Meetings held each year for children about to enter Reception Class. This reiterates that parents and children should arrive at school on time, so that each child can be given the best possible start to the school day. It is also stressed that young children particularly should be collected promptly, as they can become upset if left behind on their own. Parents are asked to share any worries that their child might have in school. Parents need to be aware that even little things can upset children, which means that they might become unhappy and might not want to come to school.

Children are also admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various Year Groups. All parents requesting a place are asked to make an appointment with the Attendance and Welfare Manager. At this meeting, the importance of regular attendance is always highlighted, together with other school routines.

Holidays & Leave of Absence

At the initial Induction Meeting, parents are requested to arrange their family holidays within the school vacations, rather than in term time. At Wistaston Academy, we ask that family holidays are not taken during school time, so that a child's education is not disrupted. Parents are reminded in Newsletters that they should not take their children out of school unnecessarily for holidays or visits. The Principal or her delegate contacts those parents who frequently take the family on holiday in term-time and reminds them of the disruption to their child's education. New regulations introduced in September 2013 state that a school is not allowed to authorise a holiday unless there are "exceptional circumstances". Should a parent still choose to take an unauthorised holiday, the school will request that the Local Educational Authority issue a penalty notice to those parents. Each Penalty Notice carries a penalty of £60 per parent/carer per child. This will increase to £120 per parent/carer per child if not paid within a 28-day notice period.

Penalties for unauthorised absence		
Timeline	One child	Two children
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your children's regular attendance

Registration

Wistaston Academy uses a computerised registration system and the Register is completed in the morning and afternoon at 8.50 a.m. in both Key Stages. Our Nursery registers at 9.15 a.m. for the morning session and 12.30 p.m. for the afternoon session. A pupil will receive a late mark (L) between 8.50 am 9.20 a.m. After these times an unauthorised absence will be recorded (U). All pupils who are late must report to the main office where an explanation and minutes late will be recorded.

The SLT are responsible for collating Attendance Records in school and notifying the Principal if there is any reason for concern. At the end of the year, each child's attendance is analysed and a copy is given to parents with their child's School Report.

The School Profile records the school attendance figures for authorised and unauthorised absence. These figures can also be found in the Ofsted Report.

Truancy

All staff at Wistaston Academy believe in the importance of continuity in every child's learning. Staff are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Although truancy is very rare at the school, if staff are suspicious that a child might be playing truant, action is taken immediately.

Parents are contacted, either by telephone or a home visit. We encourage parents to bring their child to school, so that the reasons for truancy can be discussed and, we hope, resolved. If the Attendance and Welfare Manager is unable to talk to the parent(s), he or she talks to the child to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If problems are identified, these are discussed and resolved with the class teacher/member of staff/other pupils.

At Wistaston Academy, we endeavour to discover, through discussion with the individual pupils, classes and the Schools' Council, what the children like and dislike about school. The staff consider the children's opinions and, where practical take appropriate actions.

Persistent Absenteeism

Persistent absenteeism is defined as school-age pupils missing more than 10% of sessions in a school year. This applies to those children whose attendance falls below 90%. Children who fall into this category, or who are at risk of, will be monitored closely by the school and its education consultant, if appropriate referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

Class Organisation/Lessons

- Worksheets on attendance; time-keeping monitoring sheets
- Lessons on telling the time
- Children design posters for attendance and punctuality to be displayed around the school
- Writing letters
- Class/Children's Council discussions on feelings, likes and dislikes about school
- Peer group support – contacting friends who are absent
- Positive support for those pupils who have been absent for a significant period – planned reintegration

Rewards

- End of term attendance rewards

Sanctions

- Penalty Notices may be used where all other avenues have been pursued. They will be used as a means to support parents to meet their legal responsibilities and where there is a reasonable expectation that their use will secure improved school attendance or punctuality.

Useful Documents and Resources

- DfES Consultation on the Education of Sick Children 2001
- DfES LEA Behaviour Support Plans (Circular 1/98)
- DfES/Home Office Social Inclusion: Pupil Support (Circular 10/99)
- DfES Tackling Truancy Together
- Cheshire East Council Code of Conduct on Penalty Notices