

Worplesdon Primary School



Attendance Policy

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1. Purpose of Policy

It is our task as teachers at Worplesdon Primary School to promote and support our children's learning and enable each one of them to achieve their full potential. We endeavour to help each child develop a love for life and learning.

The school staff, alongside the Local Authority, firmly believes that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. We know that every day lost to education can have a serious impact on children's attainment and overall progress in school. As a staff we do all we can to encourage parents and carers to ensure that the children in our care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. Pupils will be expected to achieve 100% attendance unless the absence is authorized by the Head Teacher. When absence is unavoidable, parents / carers will be required to inform the school at the earliest opportunity.

2. Key Objectives

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly;
- Attend school punctually;
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the school day.

We expect that all parents / carers will:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure that the child in their care arrives at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- Contact the school on the first day of the child's absence and send a note on their return to school;
- Discuss promptly with their child's class teacher or Head Teacher, any problems that deter their child from attending school;
- Not take holidays in term time.

We expect that the school staff will:

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily;
- Monitor every child's attendance;
- Contact parents as soon as possible when unexplained and/or prolonged absence occurs and obtain notes authorising the absence.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality;
- Provide a welcoming and safe learning environment for children;
- Meet with the school's education welfare officer (EWO) regularly to discuss any new concerns and report on the progress of existing cases;
- Meet with the parents of children whose attendance causes concern;
- Refer children whose attendance is an on-going concern, despite their best efforts to resolve the situation, to the EWO for additional ongoing support and guidance
- Work with the EWO and follow his/her advice once cases are referred to ensure that the legal process to address attendance concerns can be implemented if necessary.

3. Registration

By law, schools must take a morning and an afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil, using the prescribed codes. During school hours, the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day. If a pupil has to leave school for any reason during the school day, the parent / carer must contact the school with an explanation. Pupils leaving the school site during the day must sign out at the school office. Pupils attendance and punctuality is recorded and will be passed on to future schools.

4. Lateness

Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class. It is paramount, therefore, that all pupils arrive at school on time.

The register will be called promptly at 8.50 am and 12.50pm (Infants) & 1.10pm (Juniors) by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child. The registers will close at 9.20 am and 1.20pm (infants) & 1.40pm (juniors).

When a pupil is late for school they should enter the building via the front office so that they can be recorded as being present. Children will be recorded as being late if they arrive after 9am but before 9.30am, when the registers close. Any child arriving after 9.30am, without a valid explanation, will be recorded as late after close of register (U coded) and this denotes an unauthorised absence.

Persistent lateness will be monitored and letters sent to parents to inform them of learning time lost. If lateness remains a problem and this lateness is after close of register a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

5. Absences

By law, schools must record absences and the reasons given for these absences.

5.1 Notifying the School of absence

Parents / carers are asked to inform our school on the first day of their children's absence by written note, verbal message or phone call. We operate a 'First Day Absence Call' system if no message has been received by 10.00am. All reasons for absence must be recorded on the computer registration system. It's important for parents / carers to realise that not all reasons for absence may be regarded as valid and consequently may not be authorised.

On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent / carer, the school will endeavour to contact them that day via telephone. If there is no response to the phone call or the absence remains unexplained or still a concern, the office will inform the Head Teacher and further investigation and action will be made accordingly.

In line with the Education Regulations 2006 (Pupil Registration), all unexplained absences of 10 days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority. If there is persistent non-attendance, the school office will keep records of the contact with home during the period of absence and this will be discussed with the EWO when a formal referral may be made.

If a child has persistent absence or has been identified on truancy patrols and meets the criteria for a Penalty Notice to be issued; or has been taken out of school without the school's permission for 5 or more days; the school will liaise with the EWO / Local Authority (LA) to decide whether a Penalty Notice should be issued. Failure to comply with the expectations set by the EWS may result in further action, an application for an Educational Supervision Order, or court prosecution.

5.2 Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Absence may be authorised for:

- Illness;
- hospital appointments;
- school visits / attending interviews;
- for religious reasons;
- for unavoidable circumstances such as:
 - Bereavement
 - Moving house;
 - Serious emergency.

If the teacher is concerned that the absence may not be due to the reason given they should then inform either the Head Teacher who may need to discuss the matter with the parent/carer and/or the EWO.

5.2.1 Examples of Authorised Absence include:

- Genuine illness of the pupil;
- Hospital/dental appointment for the pupil ** ;
- Compassionate grounds;
- Religious observance (faith of the parents/carers) .

**Routine dentist or doctor appointments should be made, as far as possible, outside of the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance in writing. Evidence of the appointment may be requested. Parents are asked to remove the child only for the duration of the appointment.

5.2.2 Examples of Unauthorised Absence include:

- Shopping trip;
- Birthday event;
- Oversleeping due to a late night;
- Looking after other children;
- Letting the gas man in;
- Visiting relatives.

5.2.3 Special Leave of Absence

The school holiday dates (totalling thirteen weeks) are published a year in advance on the Surrey County Council website and parents / carers are expected to book their family holidays during those times. Leave of absence will not be granted for holidays to be taken in term time.

In exceptional circumstances when leave in term time is unavoidable, a leave of absence request form must be completed as soon as possible once the dates of the proposed period of absence are known. The Leave of Absence Request Form can be obtained from the school office or website.

No parent / carer can demand leave of absence for their child as a right. If leave is taken, without prior authorisation, the child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the school register.

Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. The Head Teacher will decide whether or not to authorise the absence having decided whether or not the circumstances are exceptional.

Where holidays are taken which do not fall into the "exceptional circumstances" category, these will be recorded on a child's attendance record as "unauthorised absence". All requests for more than 10 school days holiday leave within a 12 month period must be put in writing to the Director of Education.

Parents / carers of children who are consistently late or whose attendance is perceived to be poor will be referred to the Head Teacher to discuss strategies for improvement.

In the event of a pupil having unauthorised leave of absence for a period in excess of 20 days parents should be aware that there is a risk that the child might be taken off roll.

5.3 Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% from September 2017 or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Any absence has an impact on a child's educational achievement and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The Department for Education and the Local Authority monitor levels of PA children and levels of absence in all schools.

Parents will be informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance when it is a cause for concern.

6. Changing School

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform school staff as soon as possible and follow Local Authority procedures in making an application to the new school. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting at the next;
- The address of the new school;
- The new home address (if appropriate and known).

The pupils' school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.