



ATTENDANCE POLICY

The importance of regular school attendance cannot be overestimated. Regular attendance is a prerequisite to a good education and securing it must, therefore, be a high priority for school staff, governors, the Local Authority, parents/carers and the students themselves. By failing to attend school regularly, students diminish the value of education provided for them. They may also damage the learning of others because fluctuations in the size of student groups may restrict the scope for effective teaching.

Education is important. Missing school means missing out. There is clear evidence to link strong attendance to high levels of success. Children should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent that can result in legal action by the Local Authority.

All children are sometimes unhappy about attending school. Families can be going through unsettled times that can make regular school attendance difficult. Any problems with regular attendance, especially any concerns about possible bullying or learning difficulties are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child at an early stage. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never best to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that school attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by staff at the school, (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing. An absence authorised or unauthorised is still an absence and counts against the students' attendance data.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the staff at school do not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school without a good reason
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

Parents/Carers are expected to contact school staff and to work with them in resolving any problems together. The school offers an extensive range of Pastoral & Inclusion support, this is nearly always successful and the best way to resolve concerns you have. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may offer parent/carer an Early Help Assessment Consultation – (Eclipse) and/or refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Authority.

The EWO will also try to resolve the situation by agreement wherever possible but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use legal proceeding if required, including Penalty Notices (fines) or prosecution. Alternatively, parents or pupils may wish to



contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office.

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

Illness or other legitimate reason for absences:

If a pupil is unfit for school, parents/carers **should contact the school on the first day of absence before 9.00am**. If the absence is prolonged, then parents should continue to contact the school on the third day and every two days after this with a regular update. Absence will not be authorised without this procedure being followed. In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of the child's illness, such as a doctor's note/appointment letters etc. may be required. Parents/Carers should send a written explanation of absence to school with the student on their return. This school has a legal duty to inform the Local Authority of any student whose attendance is considered poor or failing. Parents/Carers may be offered an Early Help Assessment Consultation (Eclipse) to help address any attendance issues. It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after younger children, day trips, hairdressing appointments, etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which take place during school time.

Appointments:

Parents are asked to make medical and dental appointments outside school time wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, staff should be informed (in advance if at all possible). **A "present" mark can still be awarded if the child attends for as much of the session as they can. It is always better to attend for some of the time, rather than missing the whole day.** Please note: Most opticians will not offer appointment to school children during the school days and make it their policy to do so. Where appointments are necessary/unavoidable please provide an appointment card/letter to the attendance office. We will not accept verbal messages via siblings or friends regarding absences for appointments. All notifications must come through via the parent/carer for the child concerned.

Holiday:

All holiday taken during term time is at the sole discretion of the Head of School. All requests for holiday in term time must be made in writing and a holiday form completed. Holiday forms are available from the school or the Local Authority website. Requests for extended holiday will be considered on a case-by case basis and will be referred to the Education Welfare Service. Penalty Notices are now in place by the local authority. Students who take an extended holiday of 4 school weeks or more can be taken off the school role. In these circumstances you will need to re-apply for a school place via a transfer from available from the Civic Centre. Please note this does not mean your child will automatically have a place at the school.

All Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority from advice taken from the school and Education Welfare Service. Prosecutions are brought under S444 of the Education Act 1996. Please be mindful that any prosecutions can result in a Criminal Record.

Please see the attached link for further guidance and/or contact the Attendance Team.

www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/search?q=school+attendance+holidays&go=Go



Punctuality

Parents/Carers are expected to ensure that their children arrive to school in time for registration. The register will be taken by 8.545 am in the morning and for the afternoon 1.20pm. Students who arrive after that time for school will be marked in the register with the recognised late mark and minutes late added to their personal record. Students arriving between 8:50-9:00am will receive a late detention at the end of the school day, on the same day. If a student fails to attend their detention on the day they are late it will be doubled for the following day. If 2 punctuality detentions are missed the student will be placed in break and/or lunchtime detentions to make up the time. Furthermore, persistent issues with punctuality could result in a report card being issued for closer monitoring. Parents/Carers of students who present as a persistent and problematic concern for punctuality may be asked to meet with the Attendance & Inclusion Manager and/or the Education Welfare Officer to discuss the reasons for arriving to school late.

Working Together

School recognises that from time to time disruptions can occur in family life and it is the school's policy to help and support our students as much as we can through difficult or challenging times. We ask all parents/carers to talk to us about any circumstances that may have an effect upon their child's school attendance we will do all we can to offer advice or refer you to a relevant agency who may be able to assist you at that time. By working together we can ensure that school meets the targets set for it by Local and National Government and that the whole school community will benefit from a good school attendance record.

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

- The school attendance target is 95% for the 2016-17 academic year.
- School will reward students who achieve 100% attendance record.
- Those students who fail to meet the required attendance target will be encouraged and supported in every way to help them to strive to achieve the required level. We do this through Attendance Intervention Records (AIR). Each week attendance staff meet the students who are highlighted and speak with them in a positive and constructive way. The students will earn Vivo Points for improvements made and a praise card to take home.
- Those students who fail to meet the required level but who have done all in their power to attend school regularly and on time will also be rewarded for their hard work and commitment.

The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| ➤ Mrs N Davis | Executive Principal |
| ➤ Mrs N Baylis | Head of School |
| ➤ Miss R Deacy | Inclusion Manager |
| ➤ Mrs L Jones | Attendance Manager |
| ➤ Mrs H Dillon | Attendance & Family Support Officer |
| ➤ Mr C Vanes | Attendance & Family Support Officer |
| ➤ Miss Rebecca Parker-Brittain | Behaviour & Attendance Officer - Local Authority |

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly and on time. School staff are committed to working closely with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Our school Overall Attendance Target is 95% and our expectations of individuals is to have 95-100% Attendance.

