Attendance and Registration policy

Wynstones
A Steiner Waldorf School

Approved by:	School Business Manager	Date: February 2019
	School Education Manager	
	College Education Manager	
	SG Lead Trustee (Education)	
	Chair of Trustees	
Last reviewed on:	February 2019	
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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence

- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

- Acting early to address patterns of absence

- Supporting families and children who are experiencing attendance challenges by agreeing individual improvement plans

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08.30 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08.30 and will be kept open until 09.00. The register for the second session will be taken at 13.30 and will be kept open until 14.00. On the days where pupils finish the school day at 12.30 or 12.45, the second register will be taken immediately following the morning break.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 09.00 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

To report an absence please contact the School Secretary on 01452 429220 or email reception@wynstones.com

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

To report an absence due to a planned medical or dental appointment please contact the School Secretary on 01452 429220 or email reception@wynstones.com giving as much notice as is possible.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance by emailing reception@wynstones.com, the email will be passed to the School Education Manager. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Persistent late arrival at school before the register closes, will trigger communications with parents/guardians to discuss the issue.

Persistent late arrival at school after the register closes, will also trigger communications with parents/guardians to discuss the issue and agree a plan to improve (where possible). Wynstones recognizes the distances families travel to school.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Should the school not be notified of the reason for an absence by 09.00 on the day of the absence, the school secretary will immediately attempt to contact parents/guardians to ascertain the reason. Should contact not be made with a parent/guardian, the school will mark that pupil as having an unknown unauthorized absence with the code O and the school will follow safeguarding process.

3.6 Reporting to parents

The school will only report to parents/guardians on their child's attendance record should there be issues with late arrive at school (see point 3.4) or if there be an issue of absence including persistent absence (see 4.1)

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

School management may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

This reason for absence can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or

- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance: or

- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil form attending school; or

- Should the School Education Manager (or delegated) deem that the pupil may be absent for prolonged physical or medial health issues

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the School Education Manager's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

- Study leave can be used sparingly and is only granted to Class10,11 & 12 pupils during public examinations.

- The marking of absences for pupils on home school agreements for 'short days' should be as follows:

  Kindergarten – 3 year olds - pupils are registered for the morning sessions they attend but the registrations are not included in the Census return.

  Kindergarten – 4 year olds - pupils are registered for the morning sessions they attend and registrations are included in the Census return. Absences should be marked with an 'X' and are not included in possible attendances.

  Kindergarten – 5 and 6 year olds - pupils are registered for the morning sessions they attend and registrations are included in the Census return. Absences should be marked with absence codes used for the rest of the school

Unauthorised term-time absence

- Term time absence for family holidays will only be granted at the discretion of the School Education Manager.

- The school generates weekly, monthly and termly reports to monitor unauthorised attendance.

- Should a pupil have an attendance rate of 95%, the school will initiate communications with the pupil's parents/guardians regarding this matter.

- Should a pupil have an attendance rate of 93% then the school will repeat this communication with parents/guardians with the aim of identifying the reasons for the absences and establishing a plan for improving attendance.

- Should a pupil have an attendance rate of 90% or below then the school will request a meeting with parents/guardians to review the plan for improving attendance with immediate effect. It will be at the discretion of the School Education Manager as to whether the meeting is held in person or by telephone.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Through monitoring attendance performance levels and initiating communications with parents/guardians when needed, the school aims to maintain high attendance levels.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily, weekly, monthly and termly basis. There will be monthly reports generated to instigate communications to parents/guardians re absences (see 4.1). Termly attendance reports will be generated for presentation to the School Education Manager, the School Business Manager, the College Education Manager and the Board of Trustees.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents are expected to call the school on the second and subsequent days that their child is absent due to ill health.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days we will contact the parents/guardians to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we may consider involving an education welfare officer/external consultant.

If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 15%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

As the school is an independent school and not a member of the Independent Schools Council, there are no requirements to submit attendance/absence statistics. Attendance and absence statistics should however be produced for management and any Ofsted requirements

The school collects and stores attendance data via iSAMS. This information is used for internal purposes to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Trustees

The trustees are responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis through the Trustee Sub Group 'Education Lead'. They also hold the School Education Manager to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 Accountability

The School Business Manager is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented in terms of iSAMs and process including the oversight of the registration process by the School Secretary.

The School Education Manager is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school (registration accuracy by teachers and associated process) and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to trustees as part of the regular reporting.

The School Education Manager also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and may issue fixed-penalty notices, if deemed appropriate.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the School Education Manager and Safeguarding
- Works with students, parents, carers and education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues

7.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office in a timely manner in line with job descriptions.

7.5 Office / Reception staff

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the School Education Manager. At every review, the policy will be shared with the trustees for adoption.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day