



Whitewater Church of England Primary School

Attendance Policy

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance during the Covid 19 pandemic

The attendance policy will adapt in line with the Government guidance during the Covid19 pandemic. Periods of school closure, self-isolation, quarantine, staggered start and finish times will all impact attendance during this time and will inform any actions that the school takes.

Promoting good attendance

At Whitewater Church of England Primary School we aim to create a welcoming and supportive learning environment where children feel happy and safe. We place high priority on good attendance and punctuality, so that all children are able to get the very best from their time at school.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

The aim of this policy is to ensure good attendance for all pupils at the school. Our whole school target is 96% and above with less than 10% persistent absences. It sets out the school's procedures for recording and monitoring attendance, including partnerships with parents and relevant support agencies.

Any absence from school, authorised or not, will reduce your child's % attendance.

Statutory Duties

The Education Act 1996 requires that all parents secure full time education for any child of compulsory school age. Compulsory School age is deemed to start at the age of 5yrs. Schools must record attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once at the start of the afternoon. All attendance records must be recorded onto a register.

At Whitewater Church of England Primary School we aim to achieve attendance rates of 96% and above by the end of the year.

Absence from school

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (Where the school approves the pupil absence)
- Unauthorised (Where the school will not approve the absence)

Parents will be made aware that the school has the right to authorise or not to authorise absences and that the ultimate responsibility to authorise absence rests with the Executive Headteacher/Head of School. **Both authorised and unauthorised absences will affect your child's attendance record and bring down their % attendance.**

Details of authorised and unauthorised absences are given later in this policy.

As dictated by HCC, any parent whose child has ten or more unauthorised sessions within a 100 session time period will be issued a penalty fine. *Please note: a session is one morning or one afternoon.*

Informing the School of an Absence

- Parents/carers must call into the school answerphone every day their child is absent or leave a message on Parentmail by 9am.
- If we do not hear from the parent/carer we will send a text message asking for absence confirmation.
- If we have not heard back from the parent/carer by lunchtime we will call the parent/carer for confirmation of absence.
- If we have not been able to contact the parent/carer by the end of school, we will inform Children's Services of the unexplained absence.
- If the child is absent for a second day, we will follow the above procedure but if we have not heard by lunchtime, we will phone all contacts for that child. If we have not received confirmation of absence by the end of the second day, it will be referred to the head of school who will take further action.
- Children will be reported to Children's Services as 'missing in education' if they are absent from school without notice for 5 days.

What should I do if my child is unwell?

Children should not come to school if they are obviously unwell. You must telephone the school as soon as you know your child will not be attending that day. The voicemail operates out of hours. You are expected to give the reason for absence, and indicate if it is likely your child will be absent longer than one day.

Absence for genuine illness is always authorised however it will affect your child's attendance record.

How long should my child stay home if they are ill?

We have regularly updated detailed information from the Health Authority regarding absence periods related to illnesses. This gives information about the length of time children should remain home once symptoms are clearing. Should your child be ill with a 'named' illness and you would like to know when they may return to school, please do ring the school and we shall be able to tell you. This will be very helpful, as often children are able to return to school sooner than you may think, provided they are well in themselves, as the infectious periods of illnesses vary greatly.

If your child is absent due to vomiting or diarrhoea, they must stay home from school for 48 hours after the last episode. This is to ensure children are free from infection, and are well enough to attend school. Please inform the school of their expected date of return, we will record your child as absent for 48 hours unless we hear differently from you.

Lateness

- School begins at 8.50 a.m. and the doors are open from 8.40 a.m. Registration closes at 8.55 a.m. The afternoon session starts at 1 p.m. All pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time.
- Pupils arriving late must enter via the main entrance and report to Reception, when they will then be marked late and sent to their classroom. Parents are asked to sign their child in and give a reason for the lateness, as well as confirming their lunch order for that day.
- Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting their own education, as well as that of others. Persistent lateness will be discussed with parents initially and should the problem continue a penalty fine will be issued. (Penalty fines for lateness are issued for 10 late marks within a 100 session period)

* Parent is taken to mean the child's primary carer.

* Compulsory school age is between 5 and 16 years.

Persistent absence

The school will contact parents making them aware of their child's poor attendance and the possibility of a penalty fine when a pupil's attendance falls below 85% within a 100 session period and at the end of each term. The school also looks to offer support to those families whose child has had a high percentage of authorised absences.

Authorised absences include:

Illness, medical/dental appointments, religious observance, exclusion and exceptional circumstances authorised by the school. Please note, we must be informed about any of these and shown either a letter or electronic confirmation to confirm the appointment. .

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes parents keeping children off school unnecessarily for shopping, birthdays, visiting relatives, unwell parents and family holidays.

Family holidays during term time

Parents are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time as this can seriously disrupt their child's continuity of learning. They may miss significant elements of the curriculum, which can affect their overall progress and achievement, therefore no holiday absence will be authorised during term time. This approach is adopted by all schools in Hampshire.

Please note that no holiday absences will be authorised under any circumstances during times when internal assessments and tests or external SATs tests or revision are being undertaken. These dates are circulated through regular newsletters and on the school calendar on the website, along with term dates for both the coming academic year and the year following. If you are unsure of these dates, please ring to check before booking a holiday, or check on the Hampshire County Council website – term dates often vary between Local Authorities. (www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schoolholidays).

Roles and responsibilities

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.

The school will ensure that:

- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Parents/carers are contacted when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised or when there are concerns about a child's attendance.
- Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored regularly.
- School attendance statistics are reported.
- Help and support is offered to pupils and parents where attendance is causing concern.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child's attendance and punctuality is good.
- Support the school in aiming for 100% attendance for their child each year
- Inform the school by 9.00 a.m. on the day of their child's absence, every day.
- Discuss planned absences in advance, including any request for holiday absence before any bookings are made.
- Try to make medical appointments outside of school hours.
- Complete an absence request form giving the full details for a request for absence due to circumstances (including bereavements and family celebrations). It is for the school to determine whether an absence in this category should be authorised or not. Much will depend on the circumstances of the particular case.
- Inform the school, in confidence, of any circumstances that may be affecting their child's attendance.
- Provide a doctor's note for prolonged ill-health absence when requested by the Executive Headteacher/Head of School.

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school regularly and on time.