

Attendance Policy

September 2021



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Attendance Policy

Wychall Primary School believes in the fundamental right of all children to access fully all educational opportunities. Studies by the Department for Education highlight that “absence has a statistically significant negative link to attainment”. Therefore, pupils need to attend school and be punctual, for the maximum time that they are able, in order to make educational progress, not only academic, but also social, emotional, spiritual, moral and cultural progress.

By law, as stated within the Education Act 1996 Section 7,

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age cause him to receive efficient full time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and suitable to any special educational needs he may have.

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”.

In order to promote the factors outlined above, the Government has outlined a threshold for attendance of which all schools are expected to work towards. This is known as the ‘National Average’ and it is currently set at 96%. The percentage outlined is the desired attendance for the school as a whole and therefore thresholds per pupil will vary as outlined further within this policy.

Arrival at School

The gates to the playground will open at 8.40am each morning. This allows pupils to wait on the school grounds safely prior to the main doors opening.

The school doors will then open at 08:45 promptly and close at 08:55. During this time, pupils are to enter school and go to their classroom to be registered.

The relevant entrances will vary from pupil to pupil dependent upon where their classroom is situated i.e. Nursery class, reception, year 1 and year 2 classes all access school via their outer classroom door, all KS2 pupils in year 3 upwards, will access the school via the double doors next to the KS2 hall. All entrance doors will be overseen daily by staff members until 08:55.

At 08:55, all doors will close prompt in order for the pupil’s learning to commence.

Registers

Class registers are taken twice daily. The first of which is taken within each classroom at 08:55. The second register is taken within each classroom upon return from the pupil's lunch sitting. The information derived from the classroom registers is then used to inform both the dinner and fire registers respectively. As the register is taken twice, each day at school is considered to be two sessions.

Periods of Absence

Reporting an Absence

The school attendance officer should be informed by 08:30, during the morning of the first day of a pupil's absence and then each morning, for the duration of the absence. Where possible a pupil's absence should be supported by a form of evidence in the form of an appointment card, prescription, prescribed medicine label, doctors note, hospital letter (this list is not exhaustive).

Please Note: Absence will not be authorised in an instance whereby a pupil is absent due to someone else within their household being poorly i.e. their sibling or their parent/carer. This guidance will vary for families affected by COVID.

Medical appointments

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside of school hours. However, if it is necessary for a pupil to be out of school for this reason, the pupil should be returned to school directly after the appointment. Medical evidence will be required in order for such absence to be authorised. For medical appointments taking place part way through the school day, pupils will be expected to attend school first.

Please Note: Absence will not be authorised in an instance whereby a pupil is attending a medical appointment that is not their own i.e. that of a sibling or a parent/carer.

Arrangements for absence such as family bereavement and exceptional circumstances

Sudden, serious circumstances do occur, rarely, when it is impossible for a family to bring a pupil to school. It is essential that school is informed, by the parent/carer, of any such circumstance. This information will not only enable school to implement the appropriate support upon the pupils return, but will also ensure that the correct absence authorisation code is inputted where appropriate.

In all instances of absences, an 'Exceptional Circumstances – Pupil Term Time Leave Request' will need to be completed.

Religious observance

Absence due to religious observance will be authorised by the head teacher on all counts. However, it is the parent/carers responsibility to inform the school, in writing where necessary, when their child will be absent due to such and the dates of which they expect the absence(s) to occur.

Please note: Absence will only be authorised on the official day that the religious celebration falls on

Holidays during Term Time

In line with Local Authority guidance Wychall Primary School will not authorise holidays during term time. We will follow the procedure outlined by the Local Authority regarding any holidays taken during term time. This could result in a potential penalty notice being issued.

Punctuality

In addition to pupils attending school every day, it is vital that they also arrive on time and ready to learn. Any absence, including lateness affects the pattern of schooling and persistent instances of absence and lateness will have a detrimental effect on a child's learning. In addition to this, a child's late arrival disrupts teaching routines which subsequently impacts on the learning of the other pupils within the class.

In the instance whereby lateness is unavoidable, pupils arriving at school later than 08:55 will need to access school via the main entrance accompanied by a parent/carer. Upon arrival, pupils will be issued with a 'registered' sticker and then be marked in on the register by the attendance officer, who will also record the time of arrival. Pupils in nursery and KS1 will be accompanied to class by a member of staff and pupils in KS2 will walk themselves to their classroom.

In the instance whereby a pupil arrives at school later than 09:30, a late mark, highlighted as a 'U' code, will be inputted on to the register. ***Late marks ('U' codes) recorded after 09:30 are highlighted as an unauthorised absence.***

When arriving late to school, parents/carers will not be permitted to walk their child to class or interact with the class teacher as the learning would have already commenced. Therefore, any messages for such individuals can be left at the main reception.

Poor attendance:

How does your child compare?

Attendance during one school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
95%	10 days (20 sessions)	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days (38 sessions)	4 weeks	100 lessons
80%	38 days (76 sessions)	8 weeks	200 lessons
70%	57 days (114 sessions)	11.5 weeks	290 lessons

Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning and can seriously disadvantage your child in adult life.

Fast-Track to Attendance

'Fast-track to Attendance' is an Early Help approach, outlined by the Local Authority and implemented consistently within Wychall Primary School to assist in improving pupil attendance whilst also seeking to act quickly where there is unauthorised absence.

Attendance is monitored daily within school and individual attendance lower than 90% will trigger the Fast-Track process. This is due to pupils with overall attendance of 90% or less being categorised as persistent absentees which subsequently highlights a pupil as being at an increased risk of vulnerability. When concerning levels of **unauthorised** pupil absence arises, the following fast-track process will be followed:

Step 1: Early Help will be offered

Step 2: School attendance Review Meeting will take place

Step 3: Formal Warning Notice will be issued

Step 4: Referral to Education Legal Intervention Team

Safeguarding:

Wychall Primary School has a duty of care to ensure the safety of all pupils of whom are on their school roll. This includes pupils who are not accessing school but remain on the school roll in the instance of illness, fixed term or permanent exclusion. Wychall Primary School will follow their safeguarding processes vigorously in order to ensure the pupils safety and this will include visiting the child in the home.

When a child is absent from school and a message has not been received from a parent/carer the process outlined within **Appendix A** will be followed.

Children who go Missing from Education

A child going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding risks, including abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation; child criminal exploitation; mental health problems; substance abuse and other issues. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of them going missing in future.

Our school will hold two or more emergency contact numbers for each pupil – this is not negotiable and fewer than two contacts provided will be challenged accordingly.

It is good practice to give our school additional options to make contact with a responsible adult when a child missing education, is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

Wychall Primary School must notify the Local Authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly after making reasonable enquiries, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 5 days or more. The school (regardless of designation) must also notify the Local Authority of any pupil who is to be deleted from the admission register because s/he:

- Has been taken out of school by their parents and is being educated outside the school system (e.g. Elected Home Education);
- Has ceased to attend school and no longer lives within a reasonable distance of the school at which s/he is registered (moved within the city, within the country or moved abroad but failed to notify the school of the change);
- Displaced as a result of a crisis e.g. domestic violence or homelessness;

- Has been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither s/he nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- Is in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe that s/he will return to the school at the end of that period; or
- Has been permanently excluded.

Wychall Primary School will demonstrate that we have taken reasonable enquiries to ascertain the whereabouts of pupils that would be considered Missing in Education.

Early Years

Children do not legally need to attend school until they are five years of age. However, at Wychall Primary School we do have an onsite nursery for children aged between 3-4 years.

Although the pupils within nursery are not of statutory school age, the expectation is that the children still attend school every day that the school is open and do so punctually.

Children that are in nursery are funded by the Nursery Education Funding and therefore this means that in the instance of none attendance, this is reported to the Early Years Team within the Local Authority.

A child within nursery that is out of school for a duration of five days, will be reported to Early Years as 'Missing in Education'. School will take reasonable steps to establish the whereabouts of the child and this will include visiting the home address.

Wychall Primary School will follow advice from the Early Years team with regards to poor attendance and in some cases this could result in a nursery place being withdrawn.

Elected Home Education

If parents/carers make a decision to remove a pupil from school in order to home educate them, this intention must be articulated to the head teacher in writing.

After School Arrangements

Pupils will be released to adults of whom are present on their emergency contact list and/or to an adult of whom may not be on the list but is known to have collected the pupil frequently and is aware of the collection password.

School have implemented a password system in order to ensure the safety of pupils of whom are released to an adult other than a parent/carer.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform advocates, of whom they choose to collect their child, of the password. It is also the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform school immediately if collection arrangements change.

For reasons of safety, Wychall Primary School advocates that pupils will not be released to a person below the age of 16 years old. However, we also understand that parents/carers may feel that a sibling, younger than 16 years old, is responsible to fulfil this duty. In this instance, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to provide the lead DSL with written confirmation that the sibling is authorised to collect and in doing so, parents/carers are accepting responsibility for both children once they leave the school premises.

Pupils in upper KS2 (years 5 & 6) will NOT be permitted to collect siblings from lower KS2 or KS1 classes, for the purpose of walking home, without the presence of a responsible adult.

For parents who wish for their **upper KS2** child to walk home from school without an adult, alternative consent will be required in the format of a signed consent form. These can be obtained from the main school office. The signing of such consent highlights that parents/carers acknowledge that their child is responsible to travel home alone and that it is therefore the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure the safety of the child once they have left the school premises.

This process applies to upper KS2 (Years 5 & 6) only and children in lower KS2 (years 3 & 4) will need collecting by a responsible adult.

After school clubs

If a pupil is enrolled at an extra-curricular activity within school, these will generally finish at 4:15pm unless otherwise stated. In the event that the child is collected later than 4:15pm on more than one occasion, their place at the club may be terminated.

Uncollected children

Wychall Primary School have a separate policy outlining processes of which will be followed in the event that a child is not collected from school. A copy of such guidance can be obtained from the school office upon request.

Celebrating Good Attendance

At Wychall Primary School we believe very much in celebrating pupil success in all that they do and we consider attendance to be part of this.

The attendance officer monitors attendance daily and pupils will receive rewards of various stature to acknowledge their achievements throughout the academic year.

Review date: September 2022