



Attendance Policy

Introduction

Westwood Primary and Grove Primary are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its children, and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

The whole school community has a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of this policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

SCHOOL'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff (teaching and support) at Westwood Primary and Grove Primary have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our children are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

Registration

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (Appendix 1).

The school is open to children from 8.30 am. Children should be in class by 8.45am and by 1pm

The register will be taken promptly at 8:45 am and 1.00 pm by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

Morning Nursery opens at 8.30am and Afternoon Nursery is from 12.15pm The registers will close at 8.55am and 1.05 pm.

Any pupil who arrives after the closing of the register will count as absent. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted as present but be marked as late.

Absence

Absence will be authorised **only** in the following circumstances

- Where leave has been granted by the Executive Headteacher or Head of School at least four weeks in advance⁽¹⁾

- Where the **school** is satisfied the child is too ill to attend

Only the Head of School or Executive Headteacher can decide whether to authorise absence for sickness. In some circumstances, school may request from your doctor evidence that in his/her opinion your child is too ill to attend school) (2)

- Where the child has a medical appointment, and the parents have been unable to make this out of school hours. The child should attend school as usual before and/or after the appointment – school will not normally authorise a whole day's absence for a local appointment.
- Where there is an unavoidable cause which is beyond the family's control eg. extreme weather conditions
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parents belong:
- In other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.

If a child is absent from school for a prolonged period of time, or has a recurrent medical problem, parents should send supporting documentation to the school office; this will be photocopied and returned to the parent. **If a child's attendance is below 95%, absences will only be authorised if supported by medical or other relevant evidence.**

Collection and analysis of data

The Executive Headteacher will endeavour to ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate and analysed. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance. This will be reported to governors.

Accurate returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

Procedures for managing and improving attendance First

Day Calling

Parents are required to call school at the beginning of the first day of absence (by 9a.m). This information will be recorded on the class register. Thereafter, parents should call on each day of absence. If no call is received, school will call home to ascertain the reason for absence. (3)

Parents will be contacted on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the emergency contact numbers will be called. In the event of no contact being made, a member of staff may visit the family home. A letter will be sent to the parents if contact still cannot be

Meetings with Parents

Where there is an emerging pattern of absence *with or without* explanation, or if attendance is below 90%, attendance managers will advise the Executive Headteacher and Head of School. Parents will be invited to discuss the reasons for the absence, and plans will be put in place to resolve any difficulties (4)

The local agreement (followed by schools in this area) is to make a Penalty Notice Referral to the Local Authority after the sixth session of unauthorised absence (3 days or more as each day is made up of two sessions) within the academic year. The Local Authority (Suffolk County Council) will then issue a Penalty Notice fine per parent per child. A "parent" is defined as someone who has parental responsibility for a child or who has the care of that child (this includes parent and step –parent/partner

Lateness and Punctuality

- The classroom doors are closed at 8.45am
- Children will need to arrive through the main office after this time.
- Parents are required to sign the children into school using the Inventory system
- If they arrive between 8.45 and 8.55am, they will be marked as late before the register closes.
- If they arrive after 8.55am but before 1pm, they will be marked as unauthorised late (unless there is a reason that can be authorised)
- If they arrive between 1pm and 1.05pm, they will be marked as late before the register closes.
- If they arrive after 1.05pm but before 3.15pm, they will be marked as unauthorised late (unless there is a reason that can be authorised)
- They must specify the reason why their child is late for school.
- If there is a pattern of any lateness, parents will be invited to school to discuss any concerns. Late sessions may also lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notices

Parents have a legal responsibility for ensuring their children receive a full-time and efficient education, and the Local Authority have a duty to enforce this where necessary. Local Authorities are authorised to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. Penalty Notices are intended to be early deterrents to patterns of unauthorised behavior.

Westwood Primary School and Grove Primary School will use the criteria set in this policy and make a Penalty Notice Referral to the Local Authority as follows:

- After the sixth session of unauthorised absence (after more than three days as each day is made up of two sessions) within the academic year.
- **For holiday absence after the sixth session of unauthorised absence (after more than 3 days as each day is made up of two sessions)**

The Local Authority (Suffolk County Council) will then issue a Penalty Notice fine per parent per child. A "parent" is defined as someone who has parental responsibility for a child or who has the care of that child.

Parents should note that fines increase if they are not paid within the specified time. If Penalty Notices are not paid in full within 28 days of issue, the County Council will start legal proceedings against parents in the Magistrate's Court for the original offence of failing to ensure their child attends school regularly.

Further information on Suffolk County Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct can be found on their website (www.suffolk.gov.uk) or on the school's website (under Key Information/Policies) or call 0345 606 6172.

Westwood Primary School and Grove Primary School do not benefit in any way from Penalty Notices.

Holiday Absence

- All Holiday absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence except in exceptional circumstances.
- A holiday which results in absence of more than 6 sessions (3 days) will incur a fine
- More than one holiday per academic year may result in a referral to the legal court process.
- Holidays that have been rearranged due to Covid will be treated as unauthorised absence from 1st November 2022

Referrals to the Education Attendance Service

If the school still has concerns over a child's attendance after a Penalty Notice has been issued, the school will make a referral to the Education Attendance Service. An Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) will then contact the parents to arrange a meeting to discuss their child's attendance. This may result in a referral to the legal court system.

Children Missing in Education (CME)

Westwood Primary School and Grove Primary School are both fully aware of the link between prolonged and unexplained absence from school and Safeguarding. Where there is concern about a child transferring between schools or an insufficient explanation for absence, we will escalate our concerns to satisfy ourselves that the child in question is safe. We will endeavor to keep clear communication between our Attendance Lead and Office staff as well as with the parents. Where concerns remain staff will seek immediate advice and a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer in order to ensure the child is safe. Absence due to medical appointments

We encourage all medical appointments to be made outside school hours, but understand that this is not always possible. When appointments are made in school time, please provide the school office with copies of appointment cards/letters prior to the appointment.

Early Collection from school

If you need to collect your child early from school, this needs to be communicated and authorised in advance. Only on rare occasions will children be allowed to leave school before 3.15pm. Parents and Carers will need to sign their child out of school on our Inventory system

How the school promotes good attendance

Attendance has a very high profile at Westwood Primary School and Grove Primary Schools and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in classes.

1. Each week in the Celebration Assembly the class with the best attendance receives a certificate. When three certificates have been achieved, the class receive a free breakfast of their choice. In these situations the school is very aware that some children, due to long term medical conditions, may never be able to achieve a high

rate of attendance. This is taken into account when considering rewards for attendance so that classes/individuals do not feel disadvantaged in these circumstances.

2. At half termly intervals children will go home with a red, amber or green letter to show their own attendance progress toward the target.
 - a. Red= 0-90%
 - b. Amber= 90% - 94.9%
 - c. Green = 95% - 100%

PARENTS' AND CARERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full time education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Red Oak Primary School.

School expects parents/carers will

- Ensure their children attend school regularly;
- Support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum
- Notify the school on the first day of absence in person or by phone

GOVERNORS' RESPONSIBILITIES

The Active Learning Trust, working in partnership with Red Oak Primary School, shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

Conclusion

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring that children obtain the best possible outcomes in all aspects of school life. Good attendance supports children's emotional and social health and development.

Good attendance is the best way to safeguard children. – it builds confidence and gives children a sense of belonging, which ultimately teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the wellbeing of others.

Regular attendance helps to ensure that children succeed in school and in their future lives.

“There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement. Of pupils who miss more than 50 per cent of school only three per cent manage to achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A to C including Maths and English. 73 per cent of pupils who have over 95 per cent attendance achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C.” (Improving Attendance at School, Taylor, C Dept. for Education 2012)*

Good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which, in turn, helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life style.

The school requires robust systems with which to monitor attendance in order to fulfil the statutory responsibility to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of all pupils.

Reviewing the policy

This policy will be reviewed annually

Date of Issue = October 2022

Date for Review = October 2023

Notes

- (1) If the only time leave of absence can be taken is in term time, and there are **exceptional** circumstances, families need to make a request on the school's absence request form **4 weeks in advance** to the Headteacher. Any absence requested at less than 4 weeks' notice, this will automatically be unauthorised. The school office will process the request and the Headteacher may contact the family to discuss the request. Once a decision has been made, you will receive an acknowledgement slip, advising whether or not the leave is authorised. Term time holidays are **NOT** supported by the school and except in rare circumstances will NOT be authorised.
- (2) Pupils should always be encouraged to come to school; minor sniffles and tummy aches are often soon forgotten about once they start having fun with their learning.
- (3) First day calls are a vital part of Keeping Children Safe in Education. School will always follow up every absence, especially where older children walk to school unsupervised.

Following a very sad case where a mother died from epilepsy, and her young son died two weeks later from starvation and dehydration, the coroner made suggestions to changes in the way schools follow up pupil absence. We are therefore making the following changes, in line with his proposals:

- We will have at least three contact numbers for children in school. This is usually the parent(s), another family member or a friend or neighbour.
- If contact cannot be made using one of these numbers, we will attend the family address to make sure all is well.
- If there is no response to this, the Police will be called.

<https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Chadrack-2017-0120.pdf>

- (4) The school uses parenting contracts to support parents with school attendance. Whilst these are not legally binding, they are recognised as evidence should any attendance case reach Court level.

Appendix 1 - Register Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised Absence
D	Dual registration (ie pupil attending other establishments)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Un-authorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Un-authorised absence
O	Un-authorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Un-authorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity

W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Not expected to attend school (e.g. non compulsory school age or self-isolating due to Covid-19)	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced Closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances