

*This policy is informed by our Trust's vision of inspiring all - pupils, staff and our communities - to believe in their own ability in order for them to achieve the best possible outcomes, both academically and socially. By living by our values of being innovative, responsible and caring, we create powerful learning communities - positively impacting all of the Weaver Trust community.*

## **Policy Statement**

In Weaver Trust, we believe that improving attendance is everyone's business. We give clear guidance for staff, pupils and parents about the importance of regular, punctual school attendance. The Trust acknowledges that it is vital for all pupils to attend regularly, be punctual and therefore maximise the benefits of the education we provide. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and, therefore, the Trust believe that the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils can learn and thrive, alongside strong and trusting relationships between school, pupils and parents. A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons building on that after their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which parents and school must seek to avoid. We promote good attendance in partnership between home and school, to ensure a positive attitude to education and its long term benefits.

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 This policy sets out the Trust's aims for maintaining a high level of regular attendance and punctuality and also the important administrative steps to be taken to monitor and record levels of attendance.

### **2. Aims**

- To encourage pupils to see the importance of regular, punctual attendance.
- To develop a manageable and regular means of monitoring attendance, including follow up procedures where attendance or punctuality gives cause for concern.
- To foster and develop a positive attitude amongst parents, pupils and staff to regular, punctual attendance.

### **3. Procedures**

It is essential that registration procedures be followed rigorously if the school is to monitor attendance and punctuality. To this end the following procedures are implemented:

- Morning **register** is called promptly as close to 8.45am as possible. Any pupils not present by 9.00 a.m. are to be marked absent, (N). These children will then be contacted by admin, initially by telephone.
- By 9.00 a.m. all ARBOR registers are closed by class staff. Any pupils who arrive after this time must sign in using the electronic system in the front office. Admin staff will update the registers with the late code (L) if pupils arrive before the official close of morning registers at 9.15am. After close of

registration late arrivals will be marked as unauthorised (U) in the appropriate registers before the end of the morning session.

- Afternoon register is called at 1.15 p.m. and closed on ARBOR.
- Any pupils who leave the premises during the course of the school day, after being registered present, must be signed out via the office.

#### **4. Registers**

- 4.1 Pupils are expected to attend school for the full 190 days (380 sessions) of the academic year.
- 4.2 Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons. Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are documents that may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school. They may also contribute to pupils' end of term reports and to records of achievement. For these reasons registers are completed electronically.
- 4.3 If a child is absent, parents should contact school on the first day of absence to inform the school that he/she is unwell or has an appointment. Further contact should be made if a child is to be absent for more than one or two days. Notes should be added to ARBOR if a child is absent for more than two days.
- 4.4 For children with persistent illness absence, a request for Medical Evidence will be sent, and parents expected to show evidence of doctor's appointments or prescribed medication. Unless evidence is provided the absence will be unauthorised.
- 4.5 For children with longer term medical issues, reviews will take place with the INCo.
- 4.6 It is not acceptable for children to be kept off school for reasons other than illness/medical, or in exceptional circumstances.

#### **5. First Day Contact**

As part of raising and maintaining awareness of the importance of regular school attendance the school has adopted a policy of contacting the family on the first day of a pupil's unexplained absence.

##### **How the system operates:**

*8.30am: Doors open for a 'Soft Start'*

*8.45am: Register called*

*9.00 a.m. Register closed in ARBOR. Latecomers sign in at the Office (L).*

*Parents contact the school if pupils unwell or have a medical appointment.*

*9.15am Official Registers Close: Pupils arriving after this time are Unauthorised (U)*

*Admin updates registers on ARBOR*

*9.30 a.m. Admin contacts the family of any pupils with unexplained absence, by text or a phone call – both will be logged on ARBOR. If a family cannot be contacted the Headteacher is made aware, to decide on further action.*

#### **6. Procedures to Address Concerns**

- 6.1 Parents whose children have regular days of absence (e.g. regular Fridays off) will be contacted and invited into school by the attendance lead. A structured conversation, with the outcome being to improve attendance will take place and parents will be reminded about the importance of pupils attending school regularly. This

conversation will be recorded on CPOMS. Any relevant support will be offered and if appropriate a referral to the Family Support Worker. A follow up review meeting will be arranged.

- 6.2 A weekly attendance review between the Headteacher/Head of School, and the attendance lead is carried out to analyse attendance data.
- 6.3 If a child's attendance drops below 97% a letter is sent. (**Below 97% attendance letter**).
- 6.4 Following on from 'Below 97% Attendance Letter' and if absences persist and attendance drops below 95% (authorised or unauthorised), a further letter is sent home (Below 95% attendance letter) and parents may be invited to attend an Attendance Panel meeting, in an effort to address attendance issues (this is at the discretion of the Headteacher/Head of School depending on reasons for absence).
- 6.5 Wishes and feelings, or Emotional Based School Non-Attendance toolkit (if necessary), will be done with the pupil before these attendance panel meetings. Following on from the meeting, an Attendance Action Plan will be formed. Each case will be considered individually and appropriate action taken, which may involve an attendance contract, TAF, or consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- 6.6 If absences continue to persist and fall to 90% or below following the Attendance Panel meeting, a further letter is sent (below 90% attendance letter). This letter informs parents that their child's attendance is now classified as persistent absence by the Department for Education. Parents are invited to another attendance panel meeting where an attendance plan is put in place, including the request for medical evidence should the child be off again. The meeting is followed up by a letter to confirm the agreement from the meeting.
- 6.7 Wishes and feelings, or Emotional Based School Non-Attendance toolkit (if necessary), will be done with the pupil before this attendance panel meeting. Following on from the meeting, an Attendance Action Plan will be formed. Each case will be considered individually and appropriate action taken, which may involve an attendance contract, TAF, or consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- 6.8 If attendance continues to drop the Headteacher/Head of School, will consider an appropriate course of action, which may involve a TAF or consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- 6.9 At the beginning of each half term, a letter (Half term attendance reminder) is sent out to parents to remind them of the agreement from their child's attendance panel meeting and of the amount of time they have lost in school.
- 6.10 At the end of the following half term, if a child's attendance has improved, a letter is sent out to celebrate this with parents (Half term attendance increase letter).

## 7. **Fixed Penalty Notices**

- 7.1 The Department for Education has made amendments to the 2006 regulations for Pupil Registration. These amendments remove all entitlement to family holidays and extended leave, as well as the previous statutory threshold of ten school days. This means that there is no authorised absence for holidays during term time. Within Weaver Trust schools 'exceptional circumstances' are considered, this includes leave of absence when parents return from the Armed Forces. The Headteacher/Head of School will use their discretion.
- 7.2 Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued for unauthorised holidays in line with advice from the Department for Education, when parents take their children out of school during term time.

- 7.3 The threshold for a Fixed Penalty Notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday plus 6 session of arriving late after the register closes). These sessions can be consecutive or not.
- 7.4 Schools should consider the most appropriate action. If further support is needed, this can be put in place or a Notice to Improve could be issued if this isn't being engaged with. In cases where support isn't needed, such as holidays in term time, then a penalty notice will be issued.
- 7.5 The cost of the first Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) is £80 per child, per parent, and must be paid within 21 days to the Local Authority. If not paid, this will double to £160 per child, per parent. If the fine has not been paid after 28 days, legal action will be taken by the Local Authority.
- 7.6 A second Fixed Penalty Notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at the flat rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days.
- 7.7 A third penalty notice, in a three year rolling period, cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child. If the threshold for a third penalty notice being issued is met, further action will be taken using other attendance legal interventions.
- 7.8 Parents must complete an 'Absence Request' form to notify school that their child will be taking a leave of absence.
- 7.9 The Headteacher/Head of School will reply in writing detailing that the absence is unauthorised and a decision of whether to refer the absence to the local authority for a FPN according to their discretion.

## **8. Lateness**

- 8.1 Doors open at 8.30am and school begins promptly at 8.45 a.m. All pupils are expected to be in school for registration by this time. Gates are locked at 8.45am and any child arriving later than this should enter school via the main entrance reporting to the School Office.
- 8.2 If the child arrives at school after 9am, they should enter via the main entrance. Here their parent or carer should sign the child in using the entry system, giving a reason for the lateness. The child will then be sent to their classroom.
- 8.3 Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action will be taken, and parents will be invited to attend a panel to address lateness.
- 8.4 A letter will be sent to parents whose children are late to school on three separate occasions in one half term (**Lateness Letter 1**). This situation will be monitored and a subsequent letter will be sent if the situation does not improve (**Lateness Letter 2**).
- 8.5 Measures will be put in place to target pupils for whom lateness is a concern – these include Breakfast Club, collection or pastoral support.
- 8.6 Should a child's lateness begin to affect their overall attendance the procedure for attendance concerns will be followed.

## **9. Strategies to Help Support Attendance**

- 9.1 Pupils are encouraged and expected to attend school 100% of the time, aiming to never miss a minute of learning.
- 9.2 Each week, the class with the highest percentage attendance are rewarded with an Attendance Trophy.
- 9.3 Whole school weekly attendance figures are shared with parents via the weekly Pupil/Parent Bulletin.
- 9.3 Class teachers know the children’s attendance figures and support the plans in place/celebrate success.
- 9.4 Individualised incentive schemes are also used to improve attendance and punctuality for individuals and specific families for whom this is a challenge.
- 9.5 Attendance Support plans may include the following:
- Pastoral Support for child or family
  - Daily meet and greet
  - Emotional Based Non-School Attendance toolkit and actions
  - Wishes and feelings
  - Morning wake-up call
  - Collection of children
  - Parenting courses
  - Parental mental health support
  - Sleep hygiene support
  - ELSA
  - Breakfast Club

## **10. Reporting and Analysis**

- 10.1 Half termly attendance figures, including SEND, EHCP and Disadvantaged groups are shared with Governors at each Local Education Committee meeting, via the Head Teacher Report. Persistent absence is also reported on each half term. This information is used in weekly attendance meetings with the Attendance Champion and Attendance Officer to inform next steps.
- 10.2 Challenge from Governors and Trustees is followed up and minuted from the LEC.
- 10.3 A governor has regular attendance updates with the attendance lead.
- 10.4 Schools share their daily attendance data with the DfE and access to the ‘View Your Education Data’ tool to further enhance the information gathered around children’s attendance.

## **11. Attendance Contacts**

### **Barnton**

Miss Samantha Rutter – head@barnton.cheshire.sch.uk

### **Grange**

Miss Sara Albiston – head@grange-pri.cheshire.sch.uk

### **Comberbach**

Mrs Holly Young – head@comberbach.cheshire.sch.uk

### **Leftwich**

Mrs Claire Harrison/Mrs Lynn Guy – head@leftwichprimary.cheshire.sch.uk

**Westminster**

Miss Emma Dunne – head@westminsterprimary.cheshire.sch.uk

**Halton Lodge**

Mr Anthony Hilldrup – head@haltonlodgeps.org.uk

**What can parents do to help?**

Read the '**Information for Parents' Booklet**', sent out in September.

Let the school know as soon as possible why your child is absent.

Try, where possible, to make appointments outside school time. Evidence of appointments may be required.

Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary.

**If you are worried about your child's attendance at school what can you do?**

Talk to your child; it may be something simple.

Talk to the Headteacher/Head of School and staff at the school.

**If your child's attendance doesn't improve following the measures put in place:**

The school may consider contacting Education Welfare with the regards to possible legal action.

**12. Review:**

This policy was drawn up following national guidance. It will be reviewed annually, in line with our Policy Review Cycle, unless there are significant changes and therefore a need to review it sooner.