



**WESTROP PRIMARY
& NURSERY SCHOOL**

Westrop Primary School Attendance Policy 2019

Date reviewed	June 2019
Reviewed by	Cindy Acres
Review date	June 2021

Introduction

At Westrop School, we expect all pupils to attend regularly to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Regular school attendance and educational attainment are inextricably linked. We recognise that regular attendance at school is essential for good learning and continual progress and ensures that pupils get the best possible outcomes from their period in compulsory education. All school staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually.

We expect all of our pupils to aspire to 100% attendance and appreciate the full support of parents and carers in encouraging this. The minimum level of expected attendance for this school is 97% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level. The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.



Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. At Westrop we acknowledge children's efforts in improving their attendance through incentives and rewards. Those children with 100% attendance receive a special award at the end of the academic year. Parents and carers will also be notified of attendance in annual school reports.

It is parents' and carers' legal responsibility to ensure that children are attending school, and failure to attend may result in prosecution. Failure to attend school on a regular basis will be regarded as a safe-guarding matter.

At Westrop we seek parent/ carer support in

- Ensuring that their child attends school every day
- Ensuring that their child arrives on time
- Keeping school informed of student's absence
- Attending all meetings regarding attendance and punctuality
- Attending progress review meetings

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence to notify us of the reason for your child's absence on 01793 762897, please leave a clear message that states your child's name plus class and reason for absence. Please also give an anticipated return date.
- Parents should continue to call each day of absence to update the school on an anticipated return date.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher or Education Welfare Officer if absences persist



Understanding Types of Absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (Swindon Borough Council) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Social, economic and cultural considerations within the family and community
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Excessive illness without medical evidence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.



Persistent Absence

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent and carer's full support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the Persistent Absence mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

Threshold for Persistent absence

- The pupil has developed a pattern of persistent lateness – this is defined as 12 unauthorised absences due to lateness (U) over any 6 week period.
- The school has previously informed the pupil's parent/carer in writing of the pupil's persistent lateness and the legal consequences of these unauthorised absences.
- Persistent Absence pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.
- All our Persistent Absence pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All Persistent Absence cases are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer.



The Education Welfare Officer :

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Team from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement

Failure to attend school can result in a fine (currently £60 rising to £120 if unpaid after 28 days). If unpaid after 42 days you will be prosecuted.

The penalty for taking your child/children on holiday during term time without authorisation from school is £60 per parent, per child, per holiday

Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 8:40am and we expect your child to be in class by that time. Security gates are closed at 9.00am. Entry to school after this time is through the front door. Parents need to sign the late book giving time of arrival and reason for lateness. A member of the office staff will be on duty at the front door to monitor lateness.

At 9:30 am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.



Exceptional Leave:

Exceptional leave is the term that Swindon Borough Council uses for absence requests from school, whether it be for holidays for an exceptional reason, to attend a wedding/funeral or visit a sick relative.

There is no entitlement to any days' absence from school per academic year and the right for your child to be granted exceptional leave cannot be earned through good attendance. The 1996 Education Act section 444 states that parents are responsible for ensuring that their child(ren) attend school regularly and punctually. Swindon Borough Council advises Headteachers not to authorise exceptional leave requests in school time.

In an academic year, the terms are usually planned so that there are 190 teaching days in total. This leaves 13 weeks (Monday to Friday) and 52 weekends (Saturday to Sunday) where leave can be taken with no interruption to the teaching and learning for a pupil.

Exceptional leave is only granted in extenuating circumstance at the discretion of the Headteacher. Where a leave request is not authorised the absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the register; each day will record two sessions of absence. Schools keep strict records of requests for exceptional leave in term time across all year groups and log the dates and reasons for each request. Patterns of absence from previous years are carefully scrutinised. Requests for exceptional leave are retained by the school and transferred if a child moves school.

