

Wolsingham Primary School



Attendance Policy

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Document History Log:

Author of document:	S. Kitching	Job role:	Headteacher
Date document created:	September 2024	Approval by Governing Body:	November 2024

Annual Review History:

Task	Date Reviewed	Reviewed by	Signatories
First document review	02.10.2025	S. Kitching	<i>S. Kitching</i>
2 nd Review			
3 rd Review			
4 th Review			

Revisions Log:

Revision	Date of revision	Reason for revision	Resulting version number	Signatories

Attendance Key Contacts

Please find the details of those with overall responsibility for attendance, attendance support and attendance improvement within our school below.

Name	Role	Contact details
Sarah Kitching	Head Teacher / Principal Senior Attendance Champion	wolsinghamprimary@durhamlearning.net 01388 527457
Michael Paterson	Other senior leaders with responsibility for attendance	
Francine Moralee	Governor with responsibility for attendance	

If a pupil is going to be absent from school the person who should be informed is: Mrs S. Rowell, Administrator, wolsinghamprimary@durhamlearning.net 01388 527457

If a pupil, parent or family is having difficulty with attending school and requires advice, help or support then they can contact:

Name	Role / type of help	Contact details
Sarah Kitching	Headteacher	wolsinghamprimary@durhamlearning.net 01388 527457

In the first instance, pupils and parents should contact the child's class teacher for a meeting via the school office if they have concerns regarding attendance. If the class teacher is unable to provide suitable support to overcome the identified barriers or parents feel it is more appropriate, they can contact the Headteacher for a meeting to discuss issues via the school office.

Help & Support

Where help or support is needed with attendance the sooner school know about this, the quicker people can work together to support with this. Where needed this can involve other services to make sure that pupils and their families get the right support, at the right time from the right people.

Children Missing from Education

If a pupil's whereabouts are not known following enquiries schools can legally remove pupils from the admission register (the school roll) after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that parents keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Pupils place in schools are at risk if whereabouts are not known. Children Missing from Education must be reported to the Local Authority and the matter may be treat as a safeguarding issue.

Introduction to our school attendance vision and ethos

Wolsingham Primary School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils, improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Specific roles and responsibilities have been published in the [Working Together to improve school attendance statutory](#) guidance.

We recognise the link between regular attendance and the well-being, development and achievement of our pupils. We expect everyone to attend every session they are able to, to benefit from the learning and pastoral opportunities and support we offer.

Communication is vital to ensure we are able to work with our parents and pupils and support attendance.

We ask that parents check the contact details, address and emergency contact information held by the school are up-to-date are communicated to school as soon as possible as it is extremely important school can contact parents in an emergency, keep parents informed of events and progress or discuss any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

The school day

The school day is from 8.45am until 3.30pm

The doors to the Key Stage 1 entrance and Key Stage 2 entrance open at 8.45am by the member of staff on duty and pupils should file sensibly into school.

Pupils in Reception and Key Stage 1 should enter school via the Key Stage 1 entrance.

Pupils in Key Stage 2 should enter school via the Key Stage 2 entrance.

Registration is 8.55am. Registration will close at 9.05am. Pupils must be in school to be marked present, otherwise another appropriate code will be used (Attendance codes appended).

Pupils arriving late for registration, but before the register has closed will be recorded as late (L code).

In line with government guidance the registers will close at 9.15am.

Pupils who are not present before the register closes but attend during the session will be recorded as a U code unless the reason means another code is more appropriate. The U code is an unauthorised absence.

Arriving late to school can be disruptive and unsettling to the child and the rest of their class. Parents should contact Mrs S. Rowell (Administrator) if there are any issues which are affecting a pupil's ability to attend school on time.

If your child is late for school:

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the register via Arbor.

If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions

If a pupil is late after registers have closed twice or more within a 6 week period, a punctuality concern letter will be sent to parents explaining the school's concerns regarding their punctuality and asking parents to address the issue immediately.

If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality

Parents will be asked to attend a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss any difficulties with regard to their child's punctuality. During this meeting, possible strategies to support punctuality at school will be discussed such as access to breakfast club, entering school via different entrances, a meet and greet for the child when entering school or possible referral to the local authority for action if unauthorised.

Term dates and planned Inset days

Details of term dates and inset days can be found on the school website.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Head teachers are expected to restrict leave of absence in term-time to the specific circumstances in [regulation 11 of the School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#). There is discretion to consider exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts, circumstances and background behind the request. Permission must be requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with completing the form. Leave of absence forms can be requested from the school office or found on the school website.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. If an application is not made for leave then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

The DfE have stated that generally they do not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure or recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

On the first day of absence

If a pupil is to be absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to contact the School by calling 01388 527457, selecting option 1 and leaving a message, via email (wolsinghamprimary@durhamlearning.net) or in app message via Arbor, providing a reason for the absence. If a pupil is absent from school and there is no contact from parents/carers then school will contact home to find out why the pupil not in school. In the first instance, a message will be sent via Arbor in app messages. If the school does not receive a response, then a member of office staff will telephone parents/carers directly.

Appointments should be made outside of school time where possible. If this is not possible,

your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. Evidence of appointments taking place during school hours should be presented to the school office prior to the appointment taking place. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they should do.

Periods of extended absence

Parents should contact the school for each day of a child's absence. Where a child has an illness or medical issue which will require them to be absent from school for longer than a week, parents should contact the school to discuss this with the Headteacher. Parents will then be required to update the school on the child's wellbeing once per week.

No reason for absence provided

If staff are unable to get a response from the priority contact, they will call each emergency contact number held until they can speak to someone to determine the reason for the child's absence. If a reason for absence still cannot be established and there are welfare/safeguarding concerns, the Headteacher may undertake a home visit.

If the school do not receive a reason for any absence it will be recorded as unauthorised. Regular absence and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action.

Where 10 or more unauthorised absences are recorded in any 10 school week period the school must consider whether a penalty notice may be appropriate and if so will refer the matter to the local authority.

Absence authorisation

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parent's provide medical evidence to support absences.

We want to support all our pupils to ensure they can access their education and will take a support first approach. This will sometimes require communications and conversations to better understand the circumstances which may lead to absence.

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

Wolsingham Primary School will promote good attendance in the following ways:

- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools;
- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families;
- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters and on our website.
- Promote the benefits of high attendance to pupils in the classroom and during assemblies

- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absences
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance;

Attendance data

The school looks at and analyses attendance data on a weekly basis in order to target attendance improvement, identify patterns of poor attendance and address the needs of individual pupils, specific pupil ground or pupil cohorts as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

We will use data we have such as whole school, year group, form/class and individual pupil level to analyse for patterns of absence which may require some support to improve.

We will also consider different pupil cohorts such as all pupils, those who have free school meals, those with special educational needs or disabilities, pupil premium, children who have a social worker or are looked after etc to identify where additional support may be required.

We will use the information to inform what we do to support and aid discussions between staff, pupils and families.

We will monitor the data to understand the impact of what we do.

We will communicate information regarding attendance levels, as well as levels of authorised and unauthorised absence and reasons for them to staff and other professionals such as early help, TAF, TAS and the virtual school as they become involved with a child and their family. Parents have immediate access to their child's current attendance levels via the Arbor app.

Absence concerns

Parents may identify concerns about school attendance early if there is a change in child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, concerns should be shared with school so people can work together to ensure that school attendance does not decline. The earlier concerns are identified and shared, the quicker they may be resolved.

Persistent absence

Pupils who miss 10% or more of their sessions at school are persistently absent.

Parents will be contacted by the school if there are concerns about their child's attendance falling below 90%. If there is also no identifiable explanation as to why a child's attendance has fallen below 90% or attendance continues to decline, parents will be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss issues affecting attendance and identify strategies to support it to

improve. The school may support parents in accessing wider external support services to identify and support with barriers to attendance.

Severe absence

Pupils who miss 50% or more of their sessions at school are severely absent.

Where a child is identified as persistently absent and attendance continues to decline, the school will work closely with pupils, parents and partner services and agencies to provide additional support through a more formal, planned approach in conjunction with the local authority to prevent severe absence (persistently absent pupils 70% or below). Regular attendance support meetings and review meetings will be held with the School Attendance Champion.

National framework for penalty notices and other legal intervention

To improve consistency of practice across the country there is a national framework for penalty notices.

At the point where there are 10 unauthorised absence sessions recorded in any 10 school-week period, schools must consider if:

- further support is appropriate.
- support is appropriate but is not being engaged with.
- support is appropriate but is not improving attendance.
- support is not needed, such as in cases of term-time leave of absence.

If support is appropriate, this should continue.

If support is appropriate but is not improving attendance or is not being engaged with, then a referral for consideration of legal intervention should be made to the local authority. This can include, but is not limited to a Notice to Improve, an application for an Education Supervision Order, Penalty Notice or Offence investigation Interview (PACE caution).

If support is not appropriate, such as where a holiday in term-time has taken place, a referral for a penalty notice will be made. ([DCC - Penalty Notice Code of Conduct](#))

Penalty notices offer the opportunity to deal with an irregular attendance offence without the need to go to court. Penalty notices are issued at a rate of £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

There is an escalation policy which means that if a second notice is issued within a three-year period, the second notice will only be payable at the rate of £160. Further offences will not be eligible for the offer of a penalty notice and parents may be prosecuted in court. ([DCC - Penalty Notice Leaflet](#))

If penalty notices are not paid then a prosecution for the original irregular attendance offence will take place.

If convicted at court under section 444 of the Education Act for failing to secure the regular attendance of a registered pupil at school, a parent may be fined up to £1000 for each offence. If there is evidence that a parent knowingly failed to secure the attendance and there is no reasonable justification for this, they can be fined up to £2500 and/or face up to 3 months in prison, be subject to probation supervision or have a curfew imposed as maximum sentences.

Pupils with specific needs

This Policy will take account of the specific needs of individual pupils and pupil cohorts. It will be applied fairly and consistently and consider the individual needs of pupils/ families who have specific barriers to attendance.

This policy has been developed and will be implemented considering obligations of the school under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This policy is supported by our policies on:

- Safeguarding
- Anti-bullying
- Behaviour
- SEND
- Equality Information and Objectives Policy

APPENDIX A

The school and all partners will work together to:

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Expect

We all want the best for pupils and therefore aspire to have the highest attendance possible for each individual to allow them to access the education on offer to them in a culture they feel safe, part of the community and where they want to be.

Monitor

Attendance data will be used to monitor, identify and support attendance to enable school to address concerns at the earliest opportunity using a support first approach.

Listening to and understanding barriers to attendance

Attendance is everyone's responsibility and is led by the Senior Attendance Champion. Therefore, all members of staff are available to listen to any concerns which may be affecting attendance. Members of staff will work with pupils and parents to support and help to address any concerns raised or pass concerns onto a member of staff they feel may be in a better position to offer support such as the Class Teacher or Headteacher. Class Teachers may contact parents in the first instance regarding concerns that are identified by the school and parents will be contacted by the Headteacher regarding ongoing concerns.

Facilitate support

The school will work with pupils and parents to identify in school barriers to attendance, putting agreed strategies in place to eliminate them as far as possible. Pupils and parents will be guided by the school to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school, this might include an early help or whole family plan where there are wider issues affecting attendance.

The school will work closely with pupils and parents to reduce persistent and severe absence to provide wider support to remove barriers through a more formal, planned approach in conjunction with the local authority.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners will work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance may be enforced where necessary through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.