

Wallace Fields Infant School and Nursery



Attendance Policy (Pupils)

Wallace Fields Infant School and Nursery is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Reviewed: September 2023

Next Review: September 2025

Wallace Fields Infant School is proud to be a part of South Farnham Educational Trust.



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Document History

Date	Amended By	Comment (e.g. reason for version change)
13/9/2022	Katie Muir	Updated policy in line with SFET model policy and new attendance guidance from the DFE.
September 2023	Katie Muir	Policy Review

Attendance Policy

Wallace Fields Infant School & Nursery

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents and carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of [Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2022](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The local governing board

The local governing board and trustees are responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance officer (Deputy Headteacher)

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with *Inclusion Officers* and the *Inclusion Service* to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 School office staff

- School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.
- Collate attendance data for the attendance officer
- Support the attendance officer when communicating with parents

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session that takes place in the afternoon. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See **Appendix 1** for the Department for Education attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:45am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at **08:50am** and will be kept open until **08:55am**.

Children arriving after 08:55am will be marked with an L code (late arrival)

Children arriving after 08:55am, once the registers have closed, **will be marked with a U code (unauthorised late code)**.

The register for the second session will be taken at 1:30pm and will be kept open until 1:32pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

First Day Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school by phone on the first day of an unplanned absence by 09:00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness or unless the parent has been informed to provide medical evidence for all absences.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Five Days Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for five consecutive days will automatically be notified to the Local Authority (if this has not already happened), by submitting a referral to Inclusion Service (formally Education Welfare); this is a legal requirement. As part of this referral, the school will include details of the action that they have taken. For a child on the 'At Risk' Register or defined as a 'Child in Need', contact with social care and/or Inclusion Service (formally Education Welfare) will be made at an earlier stage.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Whilst the school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and the school office should be notified in advance, in writing, of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school. Evidence of the appointment may be requested. If a child needs to attend an appointment during the school day parents are asked to sign their child in / out on the Pupil Signing In/Out register at the school office.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise. A grant for leave of absence form needs to be completed by the parents prior to the absence. (See appendix 2).

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L). Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by 09:30am on the first day of absence.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.5 Reporting to parents

Parents and carers have 24-hour access to their child's attendance record through their Arbor account log in. Attendance will be reported to all parents/carers formally at the end of the academic year.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion. We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one off events which are unavoidable, examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral and respite care of a looked after child.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Where absence becomes a concern, the following steps will be taken.

Step 1	Initial conversation with the class teacher.
Step 2	Letter home to raise awareness (when attendance falls below 95%).
Step 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation to meet deputy headteacher to discuss improvements and next steps.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If attendance is under 90%, parents to be informed medical evidence for any absences need to be provided. • Targets to be set for improved attendance over 3 weeks. • Review of targets after 3 weeks and letter to be sent if improvements are seen.
Step 4	Medical evidence reminder and referral to the Inclusion Service warning letter to be sent.
Step 5	Referral to the Inclusion Service (7 unauthorised absences over a 6 week period including unauthorised late marks).
Step 6	Attendance Agreement/contract signed (Appendix 3)
Step 7	Review meetings held.
Step 8	Interview under caution and 15 days monitoring.
Step 9	Education supervision order or prosecution.

A pupil becomes a '**Persistent Absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason (i.e. their attendance is 90% or below). Absence at this level is considerably damaging to a child's educational prospects and the School requires parents' full support and co-operation in addressing this. The school monitors 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 the parent/carer will be informed of this immediately. Parents will be notified by letter if their child becomes a persistent absentee and be invited to a meeting where an action plan will be drawn up to address the issues identified. Persistent Absence pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents and any adult who is over the age of 18 living in the same household for the unauthorised absence of a child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each adult within the household, or with parental responsibility if living in different households, must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school promotes attendance in a variety of ways including:

- Delivering clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to new pupils and families through our prospectus and admission/transition events.
- Building relationships with families to offer support at the earliest point and building action plans to improve attendance where there are concerns
- Regularly communicating expectations for attendance and punctuality through newsletters.
- Monitoring whole school data regularly to identify reasons for absence, patterns, attendance of particular groups and the impact of interventions.
- Establishing, implementing and monitoring robust arrangements to identify, report and support Children Missing Education (CME)
- Offering attendance rewards for the class with the best attendance.

- Developing good support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND)
- Emphasising the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment
- Promoting the next lesson and the sequence of the lessons to motivate children to want to attend school
- Communicating with parents and carers regarding absence and punctuality when there is a concern.
- Ensuring Senior Leadership Team are present at drop off and collection times to reinforce expectations around punctuality.

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis. The cycle of monitoring attendance also includes:

- Registers taken daily for each session
- Discussion of individual pupils from the office team or class teachers
- Analysis of data for a 3 week period
- Analysis of data at each half term
- Patterns observed closely each week
- Communication to parents on the class with the highest attendance
- Reporting to governors on demographic attendance e.g. SEND, Pupil Premium, EAL.
- Ongoing analysis is undertaken throughout the term.
- Monitoring against intervention put in place
- Monitoring against targets set
- Monitoring attendance to measure impact of intervention

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health and each day they are absent from school after that (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the Inclusion Service and Inclusion Officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Attendance data is collected via Arbor and reports are used, for example, to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by [Trustee and Governors](#).

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: Attendance codes


The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed


Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Grant for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances



WALLACE FIELDS INFANT SCHOOL
GRANT FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Please return completed form to the School Office



Dear Parent/Guardian: we have received an application from you requesting your child to be absent from School during term time.

BEFORE COMPLETING THIS FORM PLEASE READ THE WFIS ATTENDANCE POLICY via our website.

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. Holidays should be taken during the school holiday period and not during term time. During the academic year pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 states that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances". The Head Teacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if such leave is granted.

Please note, where a child is taken out of school for a holiday during term time for 5 consecutive days or more, without the authority of the Headteacher, each parent/carer may be liable to receive a penalty notice for each child.

Unauthorised absence of 5 days/10 sessions or more within a three month period (this need not be consecutive) will result in the issue of a Penalty Notice: Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority in accordance with Surrey County Council's Code of Conduct. The Penalty Notice is £60, per child per parent/carer, if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in you being served a summons to appear at the Magistrates Court. In the case of separated parents, the penalty notice will be sent to the parent requesting leave of absence and / or taking the pupil out of school

For the School to consider the authorisation/non authorisation of an absence during term time for any other reason, we would firstly require you to complete the form and questions below. If a Grant for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances is authorised during an academic year no other requests for Leave of Absence in that year will be considered as laid out in the School's Attendance Policy.

Name of child:	Class:	To be completed by Headteacher	
Dates of absence requested: From: to:	Reason for absence:	Child's attendance level over the last 12 months	%
		Our overall school target for attendance this year is:	97%
Total number of school days:	This cannot be taken during the school holidays because:	Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that leave of absence is:	
Please attach any supporting evidence, e.g. a separate statement, invitation, letters, etc.		Approved	The absence will be recorded as authorised
		Partially Approved	Your request for absence has been carefully considered and has been partially approved. Absences from _____ to _____ have been authorised Absences from _____ to _____ are not authorised If unagreed absences is taken, please note it will be marked as unauthorised on their register. If your child's attendance falls below 90% with accrued unauthorised absences, they may be referred to the Local Authority's Inclusion Officer
Has your child already had leave of absence in this school year? YES / NO	Not Approved	Your request for absence has been carefully considered and has not been approved. If you continue to take your child out of school on these dates, absence will be marked as unauthorised. The issuing of a penalty notice for unauthorised leave of absence may be considered appropriate where unauthorised leave of absence in term time (5 days/10 sessions or more within a three month period – this need not be consecutive*) is taken without the authorisation of the school. If your child's attendance falls below 90% with accrued unauthorised absences, they may also be referred to the Local Authority's Inclusion Service.* According to Surrey County Council Code of Conduct for FPNs	
I also have children at (name of school)	Reason request denied / partially denied	Too short notice / Excessive amount of days requested / detriment to the child's education / already low attendance	
Parent Name _____ Signature _____	Signed and dated by Headteacher		
Date form completed _____ Date form received at WFIS _____			

Appendix 3: Content of a Parenting Contract

- Details of the requirements a parent is expected to comply with
- A statement from the school/ Local authority agreeing to provide support
- A statement by the parent agreeing to comply with the requirements for the specified time set out in the contract.