



# Whetstone Field Primary School

## Attendance policy

**\*At Whetstone Field Primary School we set a minimum attendance target of 95%\***

**Approved by:**

Chair of Governors – Kevin Thorley

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### 1. Aims

At Whetstone Field Primary School we are committed to meeting our obligations in relation 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 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 the [school attendance guidance](#) 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 \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)

- [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.
- [Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence 2022](#)

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The governing board**

The governing board is 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, Mr Stuart Cox, 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 Business Manager**

The Business Manager, Mrs D Slatcher:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Liaises with education welfare officers regarding 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 responsible for taking calls and emails from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## **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. Registers will mark whether every pupil is:

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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

All pupils must arrive in school between 8.45 and 8.50am on each school day. (Years 1-6), 8.40am and 8.45am (Reception)

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and kept open until 9.00am.

The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm

### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

Parent/carers must notify school on the first day of an unplanned absence as soon as practically possible (see also section 7). Absences can be reported to the school office in the following ways:

- A telephone call to 01922 743498 - Parents/carers can choose to leave a message or speak to a member of the office staff
- An email to [office@whetstonefield.co.uk](mailto:office@whetstonefield.co.uk)
- Informing the member of staff on playground duty of a morning.

All absence due to illness will be marked as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

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. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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.

For children whose attendance is below 90%, medical evidence may also be requested for an illness.

### **4.3 Planned absence**

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

Planned absences can be reported in the following ways:

- A telephone call to 01922 743498 - Parents/carers can choose to leave a message or speak to a member of the office staff
- An email to [office@whetstonefield.co.uk](mailto:office@whetstonefield.co.uk)

- Informing the member of staff on playground duty of a morning.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Parents/carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Please see section 5 to find out which term-time absences school can authorise.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.
- These children will automatically be logged by the system as being in the school building in case there is an emergency such as a fire alarm etc.

Lateness is monitored half termly by our Business Manager, Headteacher and Education and Welfare Officer (EWO). Monitoring takes place on a weekly basis.

Where a child is identified as having 5 or more late registration codes in a half term period parents/carers will receive a late letter (see appendix 2) informing them and offering support in improving punctuality.

If punctuality has not improved by the next half termly monitoring, parents/carers will receive a second late letter (see appendix 3) asking them to make an appointment with the Headteacher to discuss what needs happen moving forward.

Where, on rare occasions, punctuality does not improve after a meeting with the Headteacher parents/carers will be referred to the education and welfare officer for additional intervention. This can include issuing fixed penalty notices.

#### **4.5 Following up absence**

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by a phone call in the first instance. Where school is unable to contact a parent/carer, we may choose to visit the home address to ensure the child is safe.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

#### **4.6 Reporting to parents**

Attendance will be reported to parents/carers each term on the child's interim report or end of year report.

### **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'. All leave of absences are granted at the Headteacher's discretion.

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

Valid reasons we may grant an 'exceptional circumstance' 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.

This list is not exhaustive and each application for an authorised term time absence will be considered individually.

Please note, annual holidays are not considered to be exceptional circumstances.

## **5.2 Unauthorised absence**

In line with requirements set by the Department for Education, absences for events such as holidays or days out will not be authorised.

Where parents/carers are planning to remove their child from school for a holiday, day out or planned event they are required to complete a holiday notification form (see appendix 7) and return it to school with as much notice as possible.

On receipt of the completed form, school will issue an acknowledgment letter (see appendix 8) to confirm that attendance registers have been amended and to inform parents/carers that the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. All unauthorised absences will be shared with our Local Authority Education and Welfare Officer (EWO) who may pursue the absence further, which could include a fine being issued.

## **5.3 Reducing persistent absence**

Absences are monitored weekly by the school and Education and Welfare Officer.

Where a child is identified as having attendance below 95% the school will inform and work with parents/carers using our colour coded attendance system:

- Pupils with attendance below 95% but above 90% will be placed in the amber category and parents/carers will receive an amber attendance letter (see appendix 4)
- Pupils with attendance below 90% (considered persistent absence by the Local Authority and DFE) will be placed in the red category and parents/carers will receive a red attendance letter (see appendix 5)
- If attendance of pupils in the red category has not improved at the next half termly review, parents/carers will receive a second red attendance letter (see appendix 6) asking them to make an appointment with the Headteacher to discuss what support is needed to improve the pupil's attendance.

At all stages, attendance information is shared with the education and welfare office, who may contact parents/carers for further discussions.

Where, on rare occasions, attendance does not improve after a meeting with the Headteacher, parents/carers will be referred to the Local Authority for additional intervention. This can include parenting contracts, education supervision orders, parenting orders, issuing fixed penalty notices or attendance prosecution.

#### **5.4 Legal sanctions**

School or the local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent 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**

Parents/carers are informed of their child's excellent or improved attendance of 95% or above. A green attendance category letter (see appendix 9) is sent to all parents/carers termly.

### **7. Attendance monitoring**

The school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to notify school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

Parents/carers must inform school if an absence is expected to last more than one day.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss when the pupil will be returning to school.

If a pupil's absence continue to rise after communications, letters and meetings with the parents/carers, the education welfare officer may choose to contact parents/carers.

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. School will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board each term.

We will collect and store attendance data internally. This data is used 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 as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- SEND 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

Authorised absence		
Code	Definition	Scenario
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

<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

## Appendix 2 – First late letter template

<<school header>>

<<date of printing>>

Dear <<salutation>>

Since the beginning of this academic year, <<child's name>> has been late on <<number>> occasions. A registration certificate is enclosed for your information.

Lateness has a large impact on your child's learning as they are arriving at school after their first lesson has started and the teacher has explained what is expected for that session. This is unsettling for your child as well as being disruptive for the other pupils.

I understand that there is sometimes a valid reason for being late, however I would ask for your co-operation in ensuring your child arrives on time for the start of school.

If you would like any advice or support with getting to school on time please contact the school office in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Stuart Cox

Headteacher

## Appendix 3 – Second late letter template

<<school header>>

<<date of printing>>

Dear <<salutation>>

Since the beginning of this academic year, <<child's name>> has been late on <<number>> occasions and <<number>> more since we last contacted you. A registration certificate is enclosed for your information.

Lateness has a large impact on your child's learning as they are arriving at school after their first lesson has started and the teacher has explained what is expected for that session. This is unsettling for your child as well as being disruptive for the other pupils.

As this is your second consecutive late letter, we politely ask that you contact school to arrange a meeting to discuss how we can support you in ensuring your child arrives at school on time each day.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Stuart Cox

Headteacher

## Appendix 4 – Amber Attendance letter template

<<school header>>

<<date of printing>>

Dear <<salutation>>

### Your child is in the AMBER group for school attendance

Since the beginning of this academic year, <<child's name>> attendance percentage is <<%>>. A registration certificate is enclosed for your information. At Whetstone Field we set a minimum attendance target of 95% and where attendance falls below this our policy states that we will contact parents/carers to inform them.

We operate a colour coded system of attendance at Whetstone Field to allow us to support all families in ensuring their child's attendance is 95% or above. Evidence shows that absences have a detrimental effect on children's learning and progress. We understand that genuine illness, including Covid-19, may have impacted upon attendance and that this is unavoidable.

As <<child's name>> is below 95% but above 90% <<he/she>> is now in our amber category. We would now like to work with you to raise <<child's name>> attendance to enable them to achieve their potential at school.

If you would like any advice or support on managing your child's attendance moving forward, please contact the school to discuss this over the phone or make an appointment to come into school.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Stuart Cox

Headteacher

## Appendix 5 - Red Attendance letter template

<<school header>>

<<date of printing>>

Dear <<salutation>>

Your child is in the RED group for school attendance (classed as persistent absence)

Since the beginning of this academic year, <<child's name>> attendance percentage is <<%>>. A registration certificate is enclosed for your information. At Whetstone Field we set a minimum attendance target of 95% and where attendance falls below this our policy states that we will contact parents/carers to inform them.

We operate a colour coded system of attendance at Whetstone Field to allow us to support all families in ensuring their child's attendance is 95% or above. Evidence shows that absences have a detrimental effect on children's learning and progress. We understand that genuine illness, including Covid-19, may have impacted upon attendance and that this is unavoidable.

As <<child's name>> is below 90% <<he/she>> is now in our red category. Attendance below 90% is categorised by the DFE and local authority as being 'persistent absence'. We would now like to work with you to raise <<child's name>> attendance to enable them to achieve their potential at school.

If you would like any advice or support on managing your child's attendance moving forward, please contact the school to discuss this over the phone or make an appointment to come into school.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Stuart Cox

Headteacher

## Appendix 6 – Second Red Attendance letter template

<<school header>>

<<date of printing>>

Dear <<salutation>>

### **Your child is in the RED group for school attendance (persistent absence)**

Since the beginning of this academic year, <<child's name>> attendance percentage is <<%>>. A registration certificate is enclosed for your information. At Whetstone Field we set a minimum attendance target of 95% and where attendance falls below this our policy states that we will contact parents/carers to inform them.

We operate a colour coded system of attendance at Whetstone Field to allow us to support all families in ensuring their child's attendance is 95% or above. Evidence shows that absences have a detrimental effect on children's learning and progress. We understand that genuine illness, including Covid-19, may have impacted upon attendance and that this is unavoidable.

As <<child's name>> has been below 90% for two consistent half terms you are now receiving a second red category letter. Attendance below 90% is categorised by the DFE and local authority as being 'persistent absence'.

We now politely request that you make an appointment with school at your earliest convenience to allow us to improve <<child's name>> attendance as quickly as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Stuart Cox

Headteacher

## Appendix 7 – Holiday notification form

### Holiday Notification Form

Complete the form below and email/hand in to the school office to notify us of absences due to a holiday.

**Please note, we are unable to authorise holidays during term time.**

A copy of our attendance policy is available on the school website or on request from the school office.

Child(ren)name	
Year group(s)	
First date of absence from school (do not include weekend or school holiday dates)	
Last date of absence from school (do not include weekend or school holiday dates)	
Total number of school days missed	

Signed (parent/carer):

Date:

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For office use only:

Received by:

Date:



## Appendix 8 – Holiday acknowledgment letter

<<school header>>

<<date of printing>>

Dear <<salutation>>

We have received your holiday notification letter and have recorded on our register **that <child's names>** will be absent from **<insert dates>**

Please be aware that in line with Government advice, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised and will affect your child's attendance. Full details on how we monitor, record and share attendance with you can be found in our school attendance policy on our website.

All unauthorised holiday absences are shared with our Local Authority Education and Welfare Officer (EWO), who may contact you to pursue this further.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Stuart Cox

Headteacher

## Appendix 9 – Green Attendance letter template

<<school header>>

<<date of printing>>

Dear <<salutation>>

**Your child is in the GREEN group for school attendance (Excellent)**

We would like to congratulate you and <<child's name>> on their excellent attendance since the start of this academic year. <<child's name>> attendance is <<%>> - this is fantastic!

At Whetstone Field we set a minimum attendance target of 95% and you are supporting us in ensuring that <<child's name>> is able to achieve their potential at school.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Stuart Cox

Headteacher

