



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### **Our Vision**

We are committed to quality learning in a positive, happy and Christian atmosphere where everyone within the school community is valued as an individual. We expect everyone to, 'Treat others as you want them to treat you.' (Matthew 7:12-14). We have high expectations of all and strive to provide a safe, challenging, exciting and stimulating environment.

### **Our Values**

To ensure the well being and safety of our pupils are met through our school values of:

**Respect** – by respecting and supporting families effectively to enable all children to have good attendance at school ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children.

**Compassion** – by considering the needs of each child as an individual, and showing compassion and understanding in the different situations that families find themselves in, when supporting good attendance with children.

**Creation** – creating a positive, safe and secure environment which allows children to thrive and flourish.

**Perseverance** – To persevere in insisting on the good attendance of children in school, providing support and help when needed.

**Service** – by building trusting relationships with families, ensuring equal opportunities for all the children we serve, to help to keep everyone safe.

### **Opening statement**

At Willaston Church of England Primary school we believe that good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage, receive the greatest benefit from their education, raise attainment and gain the appropriate skills which will equip them for life. The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parents and partner agencies can work collaboratively. We aim for a caring Christian environment that enables and encourages all members of our school to reach out for excellence which is facilitated by each child being at school every day that it is open, and arriving on time.

## **Statutory duties**

In matters of attendance this school takes account of:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

## **Aims**

- To improve the quality of school life.
- To maintain a culture in which good attendance is 'normality'.
- To demonstrate to pupils, parents, carers and staff that the school values good attendance and punctuality, and to recognise that good, regular attendance is an achievement in itself.
- To be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions.
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive.

## **Objectives**

- To involve the children in their school attendance.
- To improve communication with parents about regular school attendance.
- To ensure that all school staff continue to take responsibility for children's attendance.
- To recognise the important role of class teachers, Learning Mentor and Headteacher in promoting and monitoring good attendance.
- To ensure time and organisation within school enables the aims and objectives to be met.

## **Responsibilities and Procedures**

### **Parents:**

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular, punctual and full time basis.
- Parents should ensure that their child arrives at school before the start of registration at 9am. Doors into school are opened at 8.50am and parents are encouraged to bring their child at this time to ensure time is allowed to enable children to manage their belongings.
- If a child arrives after 9am his/her parent/carer should report directly to the school office.
- School finishes at 3.15pm. Parents are asked to arrive promptly to collect their child/ren.
- Parents must ensure that if their child is to be absent they contact the school on the first morning of absence, and on each subsequent morning of absence. This may be by phone, letter or in person.

## **Changes due to Covid-19 from September 2020**

Parents must ensure their child arrives to school and is collected at the temporary staggered start and finish times to reduce social contacts.

### **School:**

- The school will continually monitor and record attendance in accordance with statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to each child's educational progress and achievement.
- Registers will be called twice daily, promptly at 9am and 1.15pm, as part of an orderly start to the school session.
- Children who arrive after 9.10 will be marked as 'late' (code L).
- Registers will close at 9.30am and 1.30pm. Any child arriving after that time will be recorded as 'late after close of register' (code U) which is then classed as an unauthorised absence for that session. Pupils who are late are disrupting not only their own education but that of others.
- Registers will be marked using the symbols advised by DfE and Cheshire West and Chester Council.
- Should a pupil be absent at morning registration, unless a message has been received, the school will attempt to contact, by 9.30am, the pupil's parent or carer.
- Annual attendance and punctuality figures will be reported to parents at the end of the summer term.

### **Types of absence**

- Every half day absence has to be classified by the school as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. That is why information about the cause of absence is required. Parents may not authorise a child's absence, only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents.
- Absences are authorised for reasons such as illness, medical/dental appointments if they unavoidably fall in school time, exceptional family circumstances, involvement in approved educational enrichment activity, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.
- Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable, such as absences which have not been explained, day trips, or holidays which have not been agreed. This type of absence can lead to legal proceedings by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.

## **Changes due to Covid-19 from September 2020**

- Absences due to the need to self-isolate are authorised.
- Compassion and understanding will be shown when dealing with absences due to Covid. Each case will be dealt with on an individual basis.

### **Holidays during term time**

Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for the purpose of family holidays. Absence for holiday will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and

at the discretion of the Headteacher. Parents should write to the Headteacher to request permission.

The Government discourages the taking of holidays in term time. Evidence shows that children who miss school do not achieve as well as those who attend regularly. In line with new Government legislation, of which I am sure you are aware, should you still choose to take a holiday with your child during this period, the Local Authority will be informed as this will constitute an unauthorised absence. If your child is absent on further occasions this constitutes irregular attendance which may trigger a fixed penalty notice. A Fixed Penalty Notice may then be issued to you [and your partner/husband/wife] in accordance with section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The current rates payable by parents are £60 where the amount is paid within 21 days and £120 where the amount is paid within 28 days. This charge is per parent/carer per child. If the fixed penalty notice remains unpaid this could lead to prosecution in the Magistrate's Court.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they have below 90% attendance across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to address this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly and this is combined with academic tracking. Any child seen to have reached below the PA mark of 90%, or, who is at risk of moving towards it, will be prioritised for referral. If this arises, the child's Class Teacher, the Learning Mentor or Headteacher will contact the parent/carer about their concerns which may lead to an Action Plan. Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored by our Learning Mentor and all cases of persistent absenteeism are automatically made known to the Local Authority.

### **Safeguarding**

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility; as such failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered a safeguarding matter.

### **Partnerships**

At Willaston CofE Primary we very much value the partnership we share with parents, children, staff, governors, the community and the Local Authority in matters of attendance and punctuality.

Whilst any child can be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for a variety of other reasons. Experience has taught us that such problems are most effectively resolved within the secure partnership between

school, parents and child. If your child is reluctant to attend, or you are worried for any reason, then you should contact the Headteacher. Our Learning Mentor in school can help to support difficult times.

### **Attendance strategies**

- Excellent attendance and punctuality will be promoted and celebrated in assemblies and in newsletters to the whole school community.
- The school will provide a curriculum that meets the needs of each child.
- Attendance statistics will be collected and used to inform pastoral practices.
- Individual support for pupils with high levels of absence.
- The use of home-school agreements to reinforce partnership with parents.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

To ensure that it is effective, this policy will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed annually to reflect current practice and guidance.

**Approved by Governors 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. E. Wilditch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and 'W'.

**Signed Chair of Governors**