

# Wigton Moor Primary School



## **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY** (see also A.R.M Cluster Attendance Policy)

### **RATIONALE**

The purpose of this document is to inform staff, governors, parents, carers and visitors to the school of how we ensure that current statutory regulations on pupil attendance and registration are met. This policy statement also outlines how the school will try to encourage regular attendance and punctuality of pupils and secure the support of their parents and carers.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Wigton Moor Primary School's staff and governors fully support one of the School's aims, which is that pupils develop an appreciation and understanding of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance at school.

Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them to maximise achievement. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage and poor attainment. It is the responsibility of our school to promote regular attendance and punctuality and to take seriously problems, which may lead to non-attendance or lateness. We believe the high quality of school and classroom experience we offer and our working partnerships with parents, carers' and Children's Services Attendance Advisers will enable us to have high attendance rates and keep lateness to a minimum.

Parents and carers must support the school by demonstrating that they themselves value education and achievement by fulfilling their legal responsibilities in ensuring the punctuality and regular attendance of their children. A copy of this policy will be displayed in the main entrance to the school.

### **GUIDELINES**

1. Parents and carers are primarily responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn. It is parents' or carers' responsibility to inform school of the reason for a child's absence by 9.30 a.m. on the first day of absence.
2. Parents or carers can notify the school of their child's absence by note/letter, personal contact or telephone call. Parents or carers of pupils who fail to notify school of an absence will be contacted by one of the office staff.

3. If we do not have a reason for the child's absence we will contact the first person on the information sheet we hold for the child concerned. This policy will ensure that both home and school are fully aware that the child is not at school. Parents and carers will be reminded in newsletters that they should inform the school before 9.30 a.m. if their child will not be attending school because of illness or medical appointment.
4. Children who arrive late for school should be brought by parents or carers to the school office to sign them in. Children who arrive late should not be sent in to school unaccompanied.
5. It is a legal requirement that the school informs the Attendance Team of continuous children's absences of at least two weeks and of those children who fail to attend regularly. If a child is, or likely to be away from school due to medical needs for more than 15 days or regularly miss school because of chronic illness the Attendance Improvement Officer and the Attendance Strategy Team will be notified. Registers should be marked so that they show that a pupil is or ought to be receiving education otherwise than at school. The A.I.O. can also be contacted when we are experiencing difficulty in determining whether absences are justified.
6. The school's current Education Improvement Officer is Gabby Mahey. Attendance Strategy Meetings for the Alwoodley cluster are held regularly. Children with attendance that is a cause for concern can be referred to this team. Staff should pass the names of children causing concern to the head or learning mentor so they can be followed up. The Learning Mentor or A.I.O. will contact parents or carers to discuss any problems with punctuality or attendance. If there is no improvement following this discussion then Stage 1 procedures will be put in place.
7. **Registers:-** It is a legal requirement that we keep class attendance registers in which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, children are marked present or absent. Registers will remain open for thirty five minutes after the beginning of the session in normal circumstances. If a child is not physically in front of the teacher when the register is called the child should be marked as **O**. If they arrive whilst the register is still open then **L** should also be marked. On no occasion should a blank mark appear against a child's name. If a child arrives at school after registration has closed, i.e. 9.30 a.m. or 35 minutes after the lunch bell for children going home at lunchtime it will be recorded in the office as late after registration has closed. The SIMS database will record if a child has unauthorised absence. The appendix to this policy has codes and guidance on the authorisation of absence.
8. Children who are present should be marked with a / in pen and children who are absent should have **O** marked in pen by their name. Once registers have been completed they should be sent to the school office when the registers are 'closed' at 9.30 a.m. or 1.35/1.55 p.m. Children who have been late should be counted as present when calculating weekly totals.
9. Children who are going on an educational visit should be marked absent and the letter **V** placed in the appropriate lozenge. Children who are taking part in sporting activities should be marked in a similar way but with a **P**. Pupils attending a pupil referral unit should be marked absent and the letter **B** placed in the middle of the absence mark.

10. Absence for religious observance may be agreed by the headteacher but will not exceed two days per school year. This will be marked absent as **R** in the appropriate lozenge.

11. Registers are legal documents and contain information, which is required by the D.f.E., Children's Services and sometimes for evidence in cases where parents or carers are being prosecuted for school attendance offences. Parents' and carers' letters should be saved for at least half a term and for longer if a child's attendance is of concern.

12. **Holiday:-** (see also Alwoodley Cluster Attendance Policy) Leave is not a right for parents and all requests must be authorised by the Headteacher and holiday is likely to be refused. When parents or carers request to take their children either on holiday or extended leave during term time we will ask them to complete the appropriate form. Forms should be completed at least two weeks prior to the period of absence requested. Absence for holidays will only rarely be authorised in exceptional circumstances and can only be authorised for up to ten days in a school year. Extended leave can be damaging, resulting in insufficient coverage of the National Curriculum and pupils unable to reach their potential and can have a lasting effect. Therefore, Extended Leave can only be authorised for a maximum of twenty days in a school year. This should only be for exceptional circumstances. Holiday absence for more than ten days will be counted as unauthorised. Similarly extended leave absence for more than twenty days will be recorded as unauthorised. A copy of the 'Request for Leave of Absence in Term Time' forms can be found from the office. "Exceptional circumstances" do not include:

- The availability of cheap flights during term time
- The parent/carer wishes to take a longer period of holiday

Parents and carers will be informed in both the school prospectus and in newsletters that holidays in term time and extended leave should only be arranged because of exceptional circumstances. We will also inform parents and carers throughout the year when the end of Key Stage 2 Standard Attainment Tests will take place. Parents and carers should not expect absence to be authorised:

- If the child's overall attendance is 90% or less
- At critical times of year, such as entering school in Reception, attainment test years (Y2 & 6) or the first weeks of a new school year
- If the Headteacher considers absence would be particularly detrimental to the education of the pupil.
- If long periods of holiday were taken in the recent past

Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more can lead to issuing of penalty notices and prosecution.

13. The Head teacher is responsible for considering requests for leave of absence for children from their parents or carers. Parents and carers do not have the right to authorise absence. All requests will be carefully considered in the light of the need to maintain continuity of learning. Parents may be invited to discuss the reasons with the Headteacher or a member of school staff.

14. **Rewards:-** To encourage good attendance we will present an attendance trophy to the class with the best attendance for the week in KS1 and KS2. The trophies will be presented in assembly on Monday. Any class that has 100% attendance will also be presented with a certificate. There will be a weekly prize draw

where all children in the class who have achieved 100% will be entered. All Children who have 100% attendance at the end of each term will be presented with a certificate. Those who achieve 100% for the whole year will receive a prize.

15. **Data, records and monitoring:**- The school will compare its attendance figures with the average for all Leeds Primary Schools and those nationally using data provided by Children's Services and annual RAISE on line.
16. If there is concern about a child leaving unexpectedly or any aspect of a pupil transfer, which gives rise to concerns about their welfare, the school's designated teacher for child protection and the education improvement officer should be informed. The school will always exchange or upload a CTF file for every child of compulsory school age that comes off our role. If the child's destination is unknown or not possible to check or validate we will use the code xxxxxx.
17. The office staff will enter all our attendance data on to the computer and complete a termly attendance return for the A.I.S. and an annual return to the D.f.E. Attendance figures will also be included in the Head teacher's report to the Governing Body.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Governors and staff believe that our attendance policy will enable us to fulfill our legal responsibilities on this issue. We also hope that our partnership with our parents, carers, children's Services and other stakeholders will enable us to continue to promote regular attendance and punctuality. This policy statement will be reviewed as part of our self-evaluation programme.

E. Bown  
**Headteacher**

C Mottram.  
**Learning Mentor**

**Dated:** July 2014  
**To be reviewed:** July 2017