



Attendance Policy

Date of last review:	2022	Review period:	3 Years
Date of next review:	2025	Written by:	Alison Hopkins
Type of policy:	Non-statutory	Committee:	Curriculum & Standards
Signature:			

1. Statement of Intent

The school aims to work together with parents/carers to ensure that all children and young people registered at the school attend both regularly and punctually in order that their development and achievement are maximised. It is our aim that every pupil and family at Wyre Forest School understands the importance and impact of attending regularly.

2. Parents'/Carers' Responsibilities

- (i) Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis.
- (ii) Parents/carers should ensure that if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason such as sickness they should contact the school as soon as possible, on the first morning of absence. This may be done by telephone, email (office@wfs.worcs.sch.uk) by letter or in person.
- (iii) Parents/carers may not authorise their child's absence – only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents/carers. (Should parents/carers fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence the school will record such absence as unauthorised until a reason is provided).
- (v) Parents/carers should ensure that their child arrives at school in time for the start of registration (8.45am). If a pupil arrives after 8.45am his/her parent/carer should report directly to the school office. Morning register closes at 9.15am, any child arriving after the closing of the register will be recorded as a code of U which is 'late after registration is closed' for that session which will impact on the pupil's attendance rate.

3. School Responsibilities

- (i) The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress and wellbeing
- (ii) Registers will be called twice daily (at 8.45am and at 1.05pm). Registers will close at 9.15am and at 1.15pm.
- (iii) Teachers will complete registers in accordance with the guidance contained in the staff handbook. The office will highlight any errors and/or inconsistencies on a daily basis.
- (iv) Where a student is attending offsite provision, the provider will maintain a register in accordance with policy and notify the school directly of all incidences of non-attendance.

- (v) Should a class teacher have particular concerns about an individual child's attendance or punctuality, these should be reported to the Deputy Headteacher. As part of staff pastoral duties and duty of care, all members of staff are encouraged to contact parents/carers when they are concerned about a pupil's attendance. Staff should inform the office when they take such action so it can be recorded.
- (vi) Should a pupil be absent the class teacher will enter the appropriate code in the register. Should no explanation be received from parents/carers, staff and office staff will endeavour to contact the parent. If unsuccessful, the class teacher will refer the matter to the Deputy Headteacher or safeguarding and families support assistant.
- (vii) All absence notes from parents/carers should be dated and initialed by the form tutor/class teacher or staff receiving the note. This member of staff will add a note in the Bromcom register.
- (viii) The Deputy Headteacher and support will regularly collect attendance data and will use this data during meetings with the school's Headteacher, and governing body.
- (ix) The school will employ a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance:
 - regular class teacher input about the importance of attending to be shared in tutor time and daily lessons;
 - unexplained absence will be followed up on the first day with a telephone call home;
 - pupils who are on a child protection or child in need plan will have a daily telephone call, and the social worker will be informed.
 - Attendance data will be monitored each week by the Deputy Headteacher and safeguarding/families assistant.
 - Where attendance falls below 80% and *all appropriate interventions have taken place* the case may be discussed with EIS.

4. Attendance Targets and Data

Wyre Forest School's attendance target is 95%. This target takes into consideration the medical needs of some of our pupils.

The governing body will set annual targets for reducing absence each academic year.

- The school will refer to National Special Schools Data and expectations for attendance when setting its targets.
- A range of attendance data will be collected each half term in order to identify individuals and particular cohorts whose attendance causes concern.

As part of this process a PA (Persistent Absentee) Register will be maintained where necessary and regularly reviewed.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will be doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents/carers' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

5. Holidays in Term Time and Requests for Leave of Absence

Taking holidays in term time will affect pupils' schooling as much as any other absence and will bring the children/s' attendance percentage down. We expect parents/carers not to take children away in the academic year and remind them that there is no authorisation to take a holiday during school time.

When a leave of absence is absolutely unavoidable and only in extenuating circumstances, parents/carers will be asked to complete a "Request for leave during term time form" (appendix 1).

Any applications for leave of absence must be made on the "Request for leave during term time form" at least 1 month in advance and a decision will be made at the discretion of the Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher who will discuss this with the parents/carers. The school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Fixed Penalty.

6. Attendance Procedures

First day of absence:

- When a pupil is absent from school and no contact has been made by parents/carers, office staff will make a telephone call home to determine the reason for absence. They will then log the appropriate absence code.
- If parents/carers do not respond and no reason for absence is provided, a code of N ("No reason yet provided for absence") will be recorded. This code will affect the overall rate of the pupil's attendance until a reason is provided. If we do not receive any communication after 3 days, this will result in a safe and well check being undertaken at the pupil's address. Safeguarding procedures will follow if there is no response.
- If, by the end of the week in which the pupil has been absent, no absence reason has been provided by parents/carers (but contact has been made), a letter will be sent home with a return slip for parents/carers to be able to provide the reason for the absence (appendix 2). Parents/carers will also be given a number of alternative ways of contacting school to provide a reason for absence.

- If after 1 week, parents have still not provided a reason for absence, a permanent code of unauthorised absence will be recorded which will permanently affect the pupil's overall rate of attendance.

Attendance falling below 90%:

- If a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, the Deputy Headteacher will contact parents/carers to share the school's concern regarding their child's attendance. Staff should inform parents that a letter of information is being sent. This FIRST LETTER – Attendance Below 90% (1.1) (appendix 3) will be classed as a FIRST INTERVENTION.
- If, after 6 weeks, attendance has not improved a SECOND LETTER- SECOND INTERVENTION will be sent to the parent/carer
- After 6 weeks, if attendance has not improved, a THIRD LETTER – Meeting Invite (1.2) (appendix 4) will be hand delivered to the parent/carer of the pupil and a conversation will be had with the parents/carers inviting them in for a meeting or a virtual meeting to discuss attendance. This letter will be classed as a THIRD INTERVENTION. In this letter parents/carers will be asked to contact school if they cannot attend this initial meeting so the meeting can be re-scheduled to a more convenient time. This letter will also inform parents that failure to attend or contact school may result in a referral to the Education Investigation Service.
 - During the meeting, attendance and the implications of persistent absenteeism will be discussed. Parents/carers will be informed that attendance will be closely monitored for 2 weeks to ensure attendance percentage improves. Failure of this happening after 2 weeks will mean a SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – FIRST NOTICE (1.3) (appendix 5) will be sent to parents/carers. This letter will be classed as a FOURTH INTERVENTION.
 - Failure to make contact with school or attend the meeting will always result in a SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – FIRST NOTICE (1.3) (appendix 5) being sent home. This letter will be classed as a FOURTH INTERVENTION.
- After 2 weeks, if attendance has not improved, an IRREGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – FINAL NOTICE (1.4) (appendix 6) will be sent to parents/carers. This letter will be classed as a FIFTH INTERVENTION.
- After 6 weeks, if attendance has not improved, an IRREGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – PENALTY NOTICE MONITORING (1.5) (appendix 7) will be sent to parents/carers. This letter will be classed as the SIXTH INTERVENTION.
- Attendance will be monitored for 15 school days from the issue date of the IRREGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – PENALTY NOTICE MONITORING (1.5). During this period, the child must have **No Unauthorised Absence**.

- If unauthorised absence is accrued during the 15-school day period of the Penalty Notice, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Prosecution Officer for consideration of legal enforcement action and a Penalty Notice may be issued.
- Any pupil whose attendance is below 90% and is open to attendance procedures is requested to provide medical evidence for all absences.

7. The role of the Education Investigation Service (EIS)

The Education Investigation Service works as a last resort strategy in school to reduce levels of unauthorised absence and promote whole school attendance.

When there is a serious concern about a pupil's attendance and after several steps for support no improvement is recorded (without acceptable reason for this), the school has a duty to consider a referral to the EIS.

The EIS acts on behalf of the Local Authority in enforcing a parent/carer's duty to ensure their child receives an appropriate education.

In enforcing attendance, the EIS has a variety of powers to help them ensure that children are properly educated:

- School Attendance Orders
- Penalty Notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution
- Parenting Orders

The Education Act 1996 section 444 states that *"if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence"*.

APPENDIX 1 – Request for Leave During Term Time Form

Request for Leave During Term Time

To: The Headteacher of WYRE FOREST SCHOOL Date:

I request consideration of a grant of leave of absence from school during term time for:

my child (full name):

for the period from (date): to (date):

The exceptional circumstances and reason for this request are:

.....

.....

I have (an/other) child(ren) in (an/other) school(s) as follows:

Child(ren) (full name(s)):

School(s) attended:

Signature of 1st Parent/Carer(s): Print Name:

Signature of 2nd Parent/Carer(s): Print Name:

Please return completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether the request is authorised or not.

For Office Use Only

Current Attendance:	%	Last Year's Attendance:	%
Number of school sessions taken as leave during term time (this Academic Year):			

Agreed/Not Agreed

Request for leave is agreed/is not agreed for the above student to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Signed: Date:

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent:

APPENDIX 2 – Reason for Absence Letter

PARENTAL ADDRESSEE
ADDRESS BLOCK

DATE

FORENAME SURNAME REG

Dear

I am writing to ask if you could provide a reason for FORENAME’S absence on the dates listed below as a reason has not yet been provided. Please note that registers are taken in the morning and after lunch, therefore if your child was off for the whole day, both AM and PM sessions will appear on the list below.

DATE(S)

I would be very grateful if you could complete the attached slip at the bottom and return it to the school office as soon as possible. Alternatively, you can telephone Wyre Forest School on 01562 827785 or email the office at office@wfs.worcs.sch.uk. If no reason is provided for absence **by DATE – 1 WEEK FROM THIS DATE**, unfortunately a permanent mark of unauthorised absence must be recorded and this will affect FORENAME’S percentage attendance for the school year.

Yours sincerely

**Ms Alison Hopkins
Deputy Headteacher**

**FORENAME AND SURNAME
REG GROUP**

Absence
DATEs

FORENAME was absent on the dates above for the following reason:

.....
.....

Signed: (Parent/Guardian) Date:

APPENDIX 3- 1st INTERVENTION- First Letter- Attendance below 90% (1.1)

PARENTAL ADDRESSEE
ADDRESS BLOCK

DATE

Dear

Re:

Date of Birth:

Registered pupil at:

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BELOW 90%

At Wyre Forest School we want every pupil to reach their full potential- regular school attendance is an important part of supporting them to do this.

I have noticed that FORENAME's attendance is currently at.....% and this is, understandably, a concern.

I appreciate that illness/medical conditions can cause a student to miss school but it is important that FORENAME is given every opportunity to be a part of their school community as much as possible.

In order to work with yourselves on improving FORENAME.'s attendance we will be monitoring this for the next 6 weeks. If attendance continues to be a concern you will receive a further letter advising you of next steps.

If you would like any further support with this matter please do not hesitate to contact myself or Donna Lester.

Yours Sincerely

Ms Alison Hopkins

Deputy Headteacher

APPENDIX 4 – 2nd INTERVENTION: Second Letter – Attendance Below 90% (1.2)

PARENTAL/CARER ADDRESSEE
ADDRESS BLOCK

DATE

Dear

Re:

Date of Birth:

Registered pupil at:

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BELOW 90%

We monitor attendance very closely and expect at least 95% attendance from all students at Wyre Forest School. FORENAME's attendance has fallen substantially below this figure to (*enter text here*) % and this gives me cause for some concern.

I appreciate that illness can cause a student to miss time from school but without regular high attendance, progress at school is likely to be jeopardised. It is also a statutory duty for parents/carers to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Government guidelines state that pupils whose attendance falls below 90% are classed as persistent absentees. As FORENAME's attendance is already % we would like to support you to avoid this figure getting any lower and therefore formal procedures needing to take place by Education Welfare Services.

FORENAME's attendance will be monitored over the next 6 weeks during which I hope to see an improvement. Unfortunately, any future absences FORENAME has will not be authorised unless medical evidence is provided.

If there are particular problems that you feel need to be brought to the school's attention, please contact me as soon as possible as we are keen to do what we can to support you to improve FORENAME's attendance.

Yours sincerely

Ms Alison Hopkins
Deputy Headteacher

APPENDIX 5– 3rd INTERVENTION: Third Letter – Meeting Invite (1.2)

PARENTAL ADDRESSEE
ADDRESS BLOCK

DATE

Dear

Re:

Date of Birth:

Registered pupil at:

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – MEETING INVITE

Following recent discussions with yourselves and letters received on (*enter text here*), I continue to have concerns regarding your child's attendance

Following government guidelines, Wyre Forest School's Attendance Policy outlines that any pupil whose attendance is below 90% can be discussed with the Education Welfare Service. As FORENAME's attendance is now at (*enter text here*) %, we would like to address this issue before it is brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Service.

I would like to invite you into school for a meeting on **DATE** at **TIME**. The intention of the meeting is to discuss the ways in which we, as a school, can support FORENAME and yourself in improving FORENAME's attendance.

We appreciate that this appointment may not be convenient. If this is the case, please contact the school to rearrange on 01562 827785. Failure to contact us or attend the meeting may result in a referral being made directly to the Education Welfare Service.

Yours sincerely

Ms Alison Hopkins
Deputy Headteacher

APPENDIX 6 – 4th INTERVENTION: School Attendance – First Notice (1.3)

PARENTAL ADDRESSEE
ADDRESS BLOCK

DATE

Dear PARENTAL SALUTATION

Re:
Date of Birth:
Registered pupil at:

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – FIRST NOTICE

This letter is further to previous correspondence and our meeting dated (*enter text here*).

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states:

“If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his (her) parent is guilty of an offence.”

You are therefore now put on notice that if your child continues to accrue unauthorised absences we will consider referring the matter for consideration of legal enforcement action.

I remind you that school requires medical evidence in order to authorise any absence incurred due to illness. Appropriate medical evidence can be a health professional’s note or letter, an appointment card, a prescription or sight of any medication. Whatever is produced must have the child’s name on it and a date relevant to the absence. If medical evidence is not provided an absence will remain unauthorised.

If you wish to discuss to discuss this letter or any matters affecting your child’s ability to attend school please contact me.

Your child’s attendance will continue to be monitored closely and an immediate and sustained improvement is hoped for so that further action does not become necessary.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Rebecca Garratt
Headteacher

APPENDIX 7 – 5th INTERVENTION: Irregular School Attendance – Final Notice (1.4)

PARENTAL ADDRESSEE
ADDRESS BLOCK

DATE

Dear PARENTAL SALUTATION

Re:
Date of Birth:
Registered pupil at:

IRREGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – FINAL NOTICE

S444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a child of compulsory school age, who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly, the parent of the child shall be guilty of an offence.

School records show that your child now has an attendance rate below (*enter text here*) % which includes (*enter text here*) sessions of unauthorised absence and their attendance is deemed as irregular.

TAKE NOTICE that it is considered that you may be guilty of an offence under the above Act, in that you have failed to ensure that your child attends school regularly. Attending regularly also includes a requirement to attend punctually.

Unless resolved immediately we will therefore be presenting this matter to the Local Authority for consideration of legal enforcement action.

The Local Authority may commence legal proceedings against you under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, in respect of this matter and/or any further complaint received from the school, or other places of learning. In the event of your conviction by a Magistrates' Court, you may be liable to a fine of up to £2,500.00 and/or the possibility of imprisonment for up to three months per offence.

Additionally, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to consider applying for an Education Supervision Order in respect of your child, together with a duty to consult with the Social Services Department.

Dated this xxxxxx day of xxxxxx.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Rebecca Garratt
Headteacher

APPENDIX 8 – 6th INTERVENTION: Irregular School Attendance – Penalty Notice Monitoring (1.5)

PARENTAL ADDRESSEE
ADDRESS BLOCK

DATE

Dear PARENTAL SALUTATION

Re:
Date of Birth:
Registered pupil at:

IRREGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – PENALTY NOTICE MONITORING

Re: Penalty Notice S.444(a) Education Act 1996 – School Non-Attendance

It has come to my attention that your child, **Child Name and DOB**, has been marked as having unauthorised absence from **School**.

Section 444(1) of the Education Act, 1996 states:

“If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence”.

If the reasons given for your child’s irregular school attendance are not satisfactory, then the Local Authority may issue you with a Penalty Notice for failure to comply with the law.

On receipt of this letter you are being given the opportunity to take such steps as to ensure your child’s attendance at school. The Worcestershire County Council Code of Conduct allows 15 school days from **(Enter date for the 1st day of the notice)** to **(Enter the date for the last day of notice)** inclusive, in which time **child’s first name** must have no unauthorised absence.

Failure will result in us presenting this matter to the Local Authority for consideration of legal enforcement action and a Penalty Notice may be issued to you.

In pointing out the law to you in this way, I am simply making clear your obligations to your child and I hope most sincerely that you will take such steps as would render such a course of action unnecessary.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Rebecca Garratt
Headteacher

APPENDIX 11 – DfE Absence Codes

The following codes are the codes used by school to analyse attendance data.

Code	Description	Statistical meaning	Legal meaning	Affects attendance negatively
/ or \	Present	Present	Present	NO
B	Educated off site	Approved educational activity	Attending approved educational activity	NO
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised absence	Absent	YES
D	Dual registration	Approved educational activity	Attending approved educational activity	NO
E	Exclusion	Authorised absence	Absent	YES
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised absence	Absent	YES
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence	Absent	YES
I	Illness	Authorised absence	Absent	YES
J	Interview	Approved educational activity	Attending approved educational activity	NO
L	Late (before register closed)	Present	Present	NO
M	Medical/dental appointment	Authorised absence	Absent	YES
N	Reason not yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence	Absent	YES
O	Unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Absent	YES
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity	Attending approved educational activity	NO
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence	Absent	YES
S	Study leave	Authorised absence	Absent	YES
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Authorised absence	Absent	YES
U	Late (after registration closed)	Unauthorised absence	Absent	YES

V	Educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity	Attending approved educational activity	NO
W	Work experience	Approved educational activity	Attending approved educational activity	NO
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances	Absent	NO
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	NO
Z	Pupil not on roll	Not counted in possible attendances	Pupil not registered at the school	NO