

Wyke Regis Primary Federation

'Inspiring Hearts and Minds'



Attendance Policy

Wyke Regis Primary Federation

Attendance Policy

Aim

Our aim is to ensure that, wherever possible, children are at school, on time, every day that the school is open. The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a legal duty to make sure that their child attends. Wyke Regis Primary Federation is committed to working with parents in the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. We have a collective responsibility to ensure our children are here every day.

Principles

Dorset Council Children's Services Directorate fully supports schools in expecting parents and carers to make sure that children and young people attend school on a regular basis. Any time away from school can have a significant impact on educational attainment, success in later life and longer term health and well-being.

Wyke Regis Primary Federation works in partnership with local schools, with parents and carers and the Local Authority to promote good attendance and to provide appropriate support for families where the level of attendance is causing concern.

Wyke Regis Primary Federation expects good attendance from its pupils, in order for them to make the most of the opportunities that the school has to offer. We rely on our partnership with parents to ensure that this is achieved. Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. An attendance statement is sent out at the beginning of the year setting out our expectations. (Appendix 1)

Background

Regular attendance enhances pupil progress. In contrast, significant absence will undermine learning and regardless of ability or effort, a pupil will fail to achieve expected progress.

The national attendance target is 96%. The federation target is 96% in line with national expectations.

Attendance is defined as timely presence at sessions (each day consisting of a morning and an afternoon session) recorded in Class Registers. The school year is 190 days (380 sessions). An absence of 10 days in any given academic year equates to 5.2% and means a pupil will not attain minimum expected attendance.

The Education (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended with effect from 1 September 2013 will not authorise leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Any such leave should be applied for, in good time, using the school's leave of absence form available from the school office or online. The headteacher then judges whether the request will be authorised or not.

Absences from School

Parents are required to help the school by notifying them of all absences by 8.50 am on the first day with a verbal message that is recorded by the school. Any absence which is known in advance such as medical appointments should be notified to the school in writing beforehand. Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised Absences include:

- Sickness
- Medical or dental appointments which cannot be arranged out of school hours
- Days of religious observance

NB: If the Headteacher feels that the explanation for absence is not credible then it will be recorded as unauthorised

Unauthorised Absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. This type of absence can lead to sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which are not properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark in the register
- Holidays
- Shopping, birthdays or looking after other children

Monitoring Attendance

- Registers are checked each day to ensure they are completed and any absences are noted. A text or telephone call will be made when no reason for absence has been received by 9.30 a.m. of the first day of absence.
- Unexplained absence will be followed up by the class teacher or by the office and registers adjusted if necessary
- The data from the registers is entered onto the school system which collates attendance information over the course of the year
- Late arrivals, early departures and requests for leave of absence are noted in separate registers
- Attendance figures are monitored each month and parents are informed when absence is a cause for concern (below 96%)
- After a period of monitoring, parents will be invited to attend a meeting in school to discuss their child's attendance, in line with Dorset Council Attendance procedures.
- If there is no improvement and children are at risk of becoming persistent absentees then the monitoring process is increased and outside agencies will become involved to support parents in improving attendance
- Good attendance is celebrated regularly for class attendance and each term individual certificates and rewards are issued to children with excellent attendance
- Attendance of key groups of pupils such as disadvantaged and SEN are tracked separately
- The Authorised and Unauthorised Attendance figures are published for parents and statutory authorities on an annual basis.
- The Governing Body are made aware of the Absence figures for the school half-termly
- Any circumstances that significantly affect the school's overall absence figures in a particular year are noted

Responsibilities

Parents

- Ensure your child arrives at school on time every day prepared for the day and ready to learn
- Inform the school promptly if your child is ill
- Do not book any leave of absence during term time
- Support the school's drive to improve the children's life chances to learn and achieve their full potential

Class Teachers

- Ensure that registers are filled in accurately following school guidelines
- Pursue any unexplained absences with parents
- Inform SLT and school office about any attendance concerns as soon as they arise

Office Admin

- Check registers on a daily basis
- Text or phone parents on first day of absence, if no reason provided
- Liaise with teachers and provide letter to follow up any unexplained absences
- Ensure that late arrivals are recorded correctly
- Input data from registers into SIMS on a regular basis
- Collate attendance data at regular intervals, or by request from the SLT
- Complete statutory body and local authority requests for information

SLT

- Overall monitoring of individual and whole school attendance
- Contact parents to raise concerns regarding high levels of absence
- Authorise leave of absence on behalf of the Governing Body **ONLY** in exceptional circumstances
- Instigate Dorset Council attendance procedures as appropriate
- Attend Dorset Council Attendance Panel meetings as required
- Refer to Locality Team/Social Care if necessary
- Liaise with SENCO and other staff as appropriate
- Regularly report attendance figures to parents, Governing Body, appropriate authorities etc.
- Reward good attendance on a regular basis
- Set challenging attendance targets in agreement with the Governing Body

Governing Body

- Monitor overall school attendance figures half-termly
- Review school policy and procedures annually
- Work with the SLT and school staff to improve attendance figures

Children Missing Education (CME)

The Government has placed a duty on Local Authorities to make arrangements to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age and not receiving a suitable education. In relation to children, by suitable we mean efficient full time education suitable for her/his age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs the child may have. The duty does not apply in relation to children who are registered at school who are not attending regularly.

These children are referred to as Children Missing Education. Children are identified as missing from education when they are of compulsory school age and are:

- Not on a school roll
- Not being educated other than at school
- Identified as having been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time.

Children go missing from education for a number of reasons including:

- They do not start school at the appropriate time and so they do not enter the education system.
- They are removed from school by their parents.
- They fail to find a suitable school place after moving to a new area.
- The family move home regularly.

Children with Medical Needs

Long-term health conditions – provision at home or hospital

Children or young people who are unable to attend school because of long term or recurring health conditions or mental health issues, should have a personal (or individual) education / learning plan. Their social needs should be taken into account and where possible links will be made with their school to facilitate continued social contact with peers.

Where absences are expected to last for more than 15 working days and involve a physical, psychological or mental health condition or other specific conditions, the school will either seek the advice of the Community Paediatrician, Hospital Consultant, CAMHS, or request the involvement of a Locality Social Worker. The Consultant will be asked to:

- confirm the child or young person's health condition (or mental health), and advise on what action is being taken in addressing the condition;
- indicate whether the child or young person's absence is likely to last for more than 15 working days;
- comment on the child or young person's ability to cope with educational provision, and provide guidance upon the amount provision that is appropriate;
- comment on whether the illness is chronic and likely to recur necessitating future support from the Early Intervention Services Team, thus negating the need to reapply for support inside a specified timeframe;
- indicate the treatment or support that the child or young person is to receive that will support their return to health and full time attendance at school.

Appendix 1 – Attendance Statement

Policy agreed by Full Governing Body on

Reviewed December 2020

Appendix 1

Attendance Statement – 4 schools





Attendance Statement

Dear Parent/Carer

It is essential that children and young people form good habits of regular attendance at school from an early age and that good attendance is maintained throughout their school career. The 4 larger primary schools in Weymouth and Portland, are committed to work together to ensure that they have a consistent approach to school attendance. It is a legal requirement that all children should attend their educational provision and it is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure that their children attend school. Parents should be aware that if we have reason to suspect that an absence is a holiday, we will be given no choice but to unauthorise the absence unless proof is provided. The Local Authority may take legal action following your child's unauthorised absence.

Holy Trinity CE Primary School, Radipole Primary School, Wyke Regis Primary Federation and St George's Primary Portland have agreed the following:

- No leave of absence will be granted during term time, except in exceptional circumstances
- The schools will work together to monitor the attendance of all pupils and work closely to support children and young people whose attendance levels are causing concern.
- Whilst we understand that children do become ill on occasions, children who lose a lot of time at school can suffer in the long term from significant gaps in their learning. Schools have the right to request evidence of illness and will do so if a child builds up considerable absence through illness over a period of time. If a child's health continues to affect their education, we may make a referral to the School's Health Team to ensure that all that can be done, is being done.
- If your child is ill, it is the responsibility of the parent/carers to ensure that they inform the school. The 4 schools all operate a targeted 'First Day Call' system, which means they will contact you to ask why your child is not in school and when they are expected to return.
- It is important that pupils are in school on time. Good punctuality is not only important in obtaining maximum benefit from education; it is also a key skill for adult life. Lateness is monitored by school and contributes to absence rates.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Daykin
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Holy Trinity
CE Primary

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Radipole Primary

Jo Luxon
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