

# Weston Infant and Junior Academies

Principal: Mrs J. Birchall



## Attendance Policy

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **Rationale**

To ensure that all pupils at Weston Infant and Junior Academies reach their full potential and get the best from their education, every pupil needs to attend school regularly.

Regular school attendance is a legal requirement and when a pupil begins their journey at Weston Infant and Junior Academies, parents/carers will be asked to sign this Attendance Policy, stating that they are willing to work with us to achieve good or excellent attendance for their child or children.

### **Policy and Procedures**

The school and the Local Authority work together closely to ensure that parent/carers meet their responsibility. Attendance issues are dealt with initially by the school. If this does not lead to an improvement in attendance, it is followed by a referral to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), who can provide an important link between school and families, but who can also invoke statutory action to ensure regular attendance if necessary.

### **To further support the Attendance Policy, we:-**

- Have clear registration procedures to encourage positive attitudes toward attendance and punctuality and to identify pupils at risk of meeting attendance targets.
- Work with parents/carers to support any of our families with any difficulties that may impact upon their child's attendance by enlisting partner agency support where appropriate, for example EWO, School Nurse, Home School Links Worker.
- Support learning and positive attitudes to behaviour by investigating the barriers to good attendance through attendance clinics with EWO and Senior Leaders in school.
- Have developed supportive systems of rewards and sanctions.
- Undertake analysis of patterns of absence via regular register checks and half termly attendance reports which are reported to our Local Governing Committee.
- Ask the parent/carer to ensure that up to date contact telephone numbers and any change of address is forwarded to the school office.

### **School Attendance**

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly, which is vital for children to make good progress and to benefit from the opportunities that the school offers.

If your child/children are ill, then please contact the school office as soon as possible to inform the school (this may not automatically authorise your child's absence, if their attendance has already dropped below 96% - please see below). Please note that members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and/or Home School Links Worker may conduct a home visit if pupils have been absent from school and we have not received a message as to the reason why and we have not been able to make contact with a parent/carer.

In line with government targets, we aim for our whole school attendance and for the attendance of individual children to be above 96%. If a child's attendance drops below 96% the following steps will be taken:

- 1) A school attendance letter will be sent to the parent/carer(s).
- 2) If the child's attendance continues to fall a second letter will be sent and if attendance continues to fall the parent/carer(s) will be invited to an 'attendance clinic' in school to meet

with the EWO and a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to further discuss how we can work together to ensure good attendance is now achieved from this point onwards.

- 3) Following the attendance clinic, if any further unauthorised absences occur, this could result in a penalty notice warning letter being issued by the school in conjunction with the Local Authority.
- 4) If attendance still fails to improve once the penalty notice warning letter has been sent, a statutory referral will be made by the school for a fixed penalty notice (fine) to be issued by the EWO (the Local Authority).

### **Leave of absence during term-time**

As a school we aim to raise attainment and attendance to meet National requirements, therefore any absence during term-time is **strongly discouraged**. Weston Infant and Junior Academies (The Weston Federation) will not authorise any request for leave for holidays in term time and penalty fines may be issued at the discretion of the Principal.

Therefore, **under exceptional circumstances** parents/carers **must apply for a leave of absence** during term time and must follow these steps:

- 1) An **'Application for leave of absence form during term time'** must be completed **at least four weeks before** the potential absence, which is available from the school office.
- 2) **A meeting must be arranged** to see the EWO and a member of SLT to discuss the **potential** leave of absence. Please do this via the school office.

During the meeting a number of factors will be discussed, including;

- The impact on achievement the absence could have.
  - That pupils will be taken off roll after 20 school days of absence and would then need to re-apply for a place at this school, should a place still be available.
  - That the EWO (in accordance with the Local Authority) can issue a Fixed Penalty Fine if more than 10 sessions (5 days) are taken.
- 3) The decision to authorise or not authorise that potential absence will then be made by the Principal (or a nominated member of the Senior Leadership Team in the Principal's absence) on the **'Application for leave of absence form'**.
  - 4) as the planned absence **is not authorised** then a referral form may be completed for a fixed penalty notice (fine) to be issued at £60 per pupil per parent.

**Please note:** If your child or children's attendance is currently 96% or below when you wish to make an application for a leave of absence during term time, then no term time absence will be authorised. However, you are still welcome to arrange a meeting with the member of the SLT to discuss your child's or children's attendance.

### **Religious observance**

As a school we recognise our diverse community and in accordance with guidance provided from the Local Authority, we will authorise 1 day per religious observance (with an 'R' code) i.e. Eid. Any further days of absence directly before or after the designated religious observance day will automatically be unauthorised by the school.

### **Class Registers**

1. Class teachers are responsible for maintaining an accurate class attendance register (other adults such as Teaching Assistants may complete the register under the teacher's direction).
2. Registers must be completed using the electronic 'Arbor' system and any amendments (i.e. a 'late' mark) will be completed by the school office.

3. The attendance register is marked twice a day at the start of the morning and the beginning of the afternoon. For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present or absent. Absences will only be authorised by the school when an explanation has been given by parent/carer(s) (e.g. illness). Explanation must be in person, or by telephone message on the first day of absence.
4. Correct codes for recording attendance/absence are set out in each register.
5. Pupil attendance at school is 2 sessions per day. Morning (am) is counted as one session and afternoon (pm) is counted as another session. Registers are taken for all pupils at 9:00 am and then at 1:00pm.

Our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has the responsibility for monitoring attendance and highlighting concerns through regular review meetings with the Home School Links Worker and EWO (Education Welfare Officer).

### **Punctuality**

The Infant Academy is open from 8.15 am for Breakfast Club, the main school doors open at 8:45 am for our start of the day activities. Registration is at 9:00am for all pupils.

The Junior Academy is open from 8:15 am for Breakfast Club. A member of staff will be on the playground to supervise children from 8:30 am and doors open at 8:45 am. Registration is at 9:00am for all pupils.

The school doors are locked at 9:00 am; any child arriving after this time must come into school via the school office. Any child arriving after 9:00 am will be marked as 'late'. Any child arriving late must be signed in by the parent/carer/adult bringing the child to school using the register located at the school office.

Late arrivals from the entry system and enters this information into the 'Arbor' system (used for registrations, data and record keeping). Late arrivals are monitored.

If a child is consistently late, parents may be invited to attend a meeting to discuss punctuality with the class teacher. If punctuality continues to be a concern, further meetings will then be organised with a member of SLT and the EWO.

### **Recording absence and punctuality**

Weston Infant and Junior Academies (The Weston Federation) clearly differentiates between authorised and non-authorised absence. An absence is only authorised when the reason (illness, bereavement, and religious observation) can be seen as a genuine explanation of the absence.

Every half term the school is required to submit details of Persistent Absence to the EWO. We are required to inform them of how many half days were missed due to authorised and unauthorised absence. Children are classed as Persistent Absentees if their attendance is below 90%. This is recorded as a percentage attendance and is used as an overall guide to the school's success in promoting good attendance and punctuality.

### **Appointments**

All medical, dental and other appointments must be made out of school time. We strongly advise that you do not take your child or children out of school for appointments if this can be avoided. Please note that if this happens it may affect your child's attendance figure and in some cases may be noted as unauthorised if evidence is not provided (i.e. a hospital letter or appropriately prescribed medication).

### **Rewards**

Children who have 96% or above attendance for a month will receive a certificate.

During celebration assembly, attendance is shared for the previous week for each class and the results are then displayed on our attendance board in the hall and on Class Dojo.

**The following forms part of this policy:**

- Parents/carers will ensure that their child will attend every session unless there is a genuine illness.
- Parents/carers also agree to contact school with a reason for their child's absence on the day of absence (and each day thereafter). If no reason provided, the absence will be noted on the register as unauthorised. Home visits may occur if no message explaining a pupil's absence has been received and we have not been able to make contact with the parents/carers of that pupil or pupils.
- If a pupil's attendance falls below 96%, parents/carers may be contacted by either the Home School Links Worker, a member of SLT or the Education Welfare Officer to discuss the reasons for absence and any support that is required and deemed necessary.
- Where a child's attendance falls below 90%, parents/carers will be asked to provide medical evidence in order for these absences to be authorised. Evidence will be requested until attendance exceeds 90%.

Weston Infant and Junior Academies (The Weston Federation) will support parents/carers and pupils wherever possible to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. Parents/carers are welcome to make an appointment to speak with a member of SLT or our Home School Links Worker, if they have any attendance concerns.

**Date:** Dec 2021

**Review Date:** Dec 2022