

Waterthorpe Nursery Infant School



Attendance Policy

January 2018

Approved by: Steering Committee

Date: 6th February 2018

Next Review Date: Spring 2021

This is a Family of Schools Adopted Policy

Aims of the policy:

At Waterthorpe Nursery Infant School we aim to make children feel happy and secure in their environment so that each child can grow socially, emotionally, intellectually and morally. Regular attendance and punctuality are key elements in meeting these aims and in raising achievement. It is important to work in partnership with parents/carers, the community and other professionals to secure good attendance and punctuality for all our pupils.

This policy sets out the procedures in place to meet these aims.

Legal Attendance Requirements:

The Local Authority (L.A.) has a statutory duty to ensure that the parents/carers, of children who are registered at a school, make certain that their children attend regularly and punctually. The Strategic Lead for Attendance is employed by the L.A. and has the responsibility for ensuring regular attendance of all pupils. When the school has concerns over attendance/punctuality of a pupil we will use a range of strategies to improve attendance, which may result in referral to the local multi-agency support team (MAST) for further support.

The parent/carer has a legal responsibility to secure an education for their child when they are over the age of 5 years old. If a pupil fails to attend school regularly the L.A. has the power to initiate prosecution or to seek an Education Supervision Order (If the council thinks you need support getting your child to go to school but you're not co-operating, they can apply to a court for an Education Supervision Order.)

Nursery and under 5's:

Whilst it is not a legal requirement for children to attend school before their fifth birthday the staff and governors believe that regular attendance prior to this age is vital in helping children settle and feel secure in their routines and environment. The school operates the same policy for both nursery and school children on this premise. Where there are concerns about attendance for children under 5, or where it is known that a child eligible for Reception/Foundation Stage 2 is not attending a school and is in our catchment area, the school will contact the family.

Authorised Absence Procedures:

Absence from school may be authorised by the Headteacher or the School Admin Officer.

The following reasons for absence will be authorised:

- A pupil is ill and has attendance above 90%

- A pupil has a medical or dental appointment (please bring appointment card/letter)
- A pupil is observing a religious holiday
- There is a family bereavement
- A pupil has a Local Authority license to take part in a public performance
- A pupil is visiting another school with the prospect of transferring there

The following reasons for absence will not be authorised:

- Illness, without medical evidence, when attendance is below 90%
- Any holidays that are not granted under the Exceptional Leave Policy
- Holidays during the first two weeks of the academic year
- Unexceptional circumstances e.g. the child's birthday
- Situations when no explanation is forthcoming or the school, following investigation into an absence is not satisfied with the explanation given

Obtaining authorisation for an absence:

When a parent/carer needs authorisation for a planned absence they should contact the school. The Exceptional Leave Policy gives further information regarding requests for term time leave.

If the child does not return to school on the date agreed after authorised leave, further leave will be unauthorised unless another reason is given by the carer. If they do not return on the planned date following authorised leave, children may be removed from the school role.

Absence for medical/health reasons:

For medical appointment during school hours an authorised absence pass can be obtained from the school office. (This does not need to be countersigned by a medic.) If a pupil is absent from school due to illness the parent/carer should contact the school on the first day of absence; they should indicate how long they think the absence might be and let the school know if they will be visiting the G.P. Parents/carers should keep the school informed at least every three days. If a pupil is absent from school, and no explanation has been given, the school will contact parents/carers by telephone on the first day of absence.

Where it is not possible to contact the child's parents/carers on the first day the school will continue to try to make contact each day. If no contact has been made by the fifth day a home visit or MAST referral will be made.

If a child has been absent, and the school has no reason recorded for this 5 days after the absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised.

Return to school after a prolonged absence:

Where a child has been absent for a period of 4 weeks or more a re-integration meeting will be held between the school and the parents/carers. A plan will be made for the child's return to school. This may involve the child visiting the classroom, initial part time attendance and/or the parents/carer staying in the classroom for a short period while the child settles in.

Persistent Absentees

Where children have absences of 10% or more they will be identified as persistent absentees. This percentage may change in line with government policy. The attendance of these children will be closely monitored and further action, in-line with our attendance procedures, will take place. Meetings with parents and home visits would form part of the support given by the school. If attendance does not improve a referral will be made to the Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST).

Registering attendance:

The base doors to each classroom are locked at 9:00 a.m. After this time all children must enter school through the office doors and must let the School Admin Officer know that they have arrived.

Each morning and afternoon session begins with the completion, by the class teacher, of the class register. The registers are brought from classrooms approximately 10 minutes after registration begins. All pupils arriving after this time will be given a late mark. The register closes at 9:30a.m. each morning. All children arriving after that time will be given an unauthorised absence mark.

Reporting Attendance figures to parents:

In the spring term of each year, parents/carers of children in Foundation Stage 2 and Key Stage 1 will receive an annual report on the progress of their child in school. This report will contain details of a child's authorised and unauthorised absences.

Attendance letters will be sent out each half term, or when concerns arise. The following letters may be sent out:

- Praise for 100% attendance
- Rewards for attendance above 95%
- Letter of concern for attendance below 90% or at risk of going below 90%
- Letter of concern where a child is regularly late for school

- Invitation to a meeting for attendance below 90% or at risk of going below 90%
- Invitation to a meeting where a child is regularly late for school

Where a parent/carer is invited to a meeting and attendance plan will be put in place. The meeting will go ahead if the parent/carer does not attend.

If, after this meeting, attendance continues to be low a further meeting will be held with the school and the Local Authority Attendance and Inclusion Officer. A referral may be made to the MAST team for additional support.

As a last resort, when parents/carers do not work with the school and MAST to improve attendance, penalty fines may be imposed.

Attendance figures for the school are regularly shared with parents, carers and families. The class with the best attendance each week are rewarded with the 'Class of the Week' Cup in Merit Assembly.

Attendance Monitoring flow chart:

1. At the end of each half term, the percentage attendance list is checked. During a half term, the teachers or admin staff may also raise concerns regarding absences of children. The following will apply when checks are made:
 - a. All attendance below 95% ~ Individual registration sheets checked for reasons. Where there are not acceptable reasons or where there is a pattern or concern, monitoring will begin.
 - b. Attendance under 90% will be closely scrutinised for absence reasons. It may be due to a holiday taken early in the year, a medical issue etc. If there is a concern then the school would move to step 'c' below and monitor closely further absences.
 - c. Where attendance is a concern, a letter will be sent to parents/carers alerting them. This will include information about absence being unauthorised without medical evidence when attendance is below 90%.
 - d. Where the problem persists, a letter is sent to invite parents/carers to a meeting. This may be before the end of the next half term if further absences occur. If the parent/carer does not attend a meeting, it will be held in their absence. A referral to the Attendance and Inclusion Officer may be made and a further meeting arranged unless attendance improves.
 - e. If the attendance does not improve at this point, or the parent/carer does not attend the second meeting, a referral to MAST will be made and a penalty fine warning may be issued.

- f. Following any meeting a plan of action will be made and monitoring will continue. If necessary, the plan may include a referral to an outside agency.
- g. After the action plan has been followed there would be a referral to MAST if attendance hadn't risen to over 90% during the monitoring period.
- h. Where attendance improves after a period of monitoring the child would be removed from the monitoring list.

Setting Attendance Targets:

Each year the school sets attendance targets. This data will form part of the school's attendance plan. The Local Authority closely monitors attendance in school and may take steps to intervene where it falls below an acceptable level. Ofsted Inspections refer closely to attendance targets and results and will look at school strategies to improve attendance.

Promoting Good Attendance:

We endeavour to make each child's experiences happy and enjoyable. When a child shows reluctance to come to school/nursery we encourage parents to talk to the class teacher or key worker. We will then investigate the reasons, for any reluctance to attend school, and take steps to rectify the situation.

To promote good attendance, we have special attendance awards in assemblies in school. which includes awards for attendance above 95% and for 100% attendance.

At the end of the academic year children who have 100% attendance for the whole the year will get a special reward or trophy.

Children will be excluded from any attendance award if they have been recorded as late on 5 or more occasions as good punctuality is very important.

Where pupils show an improvement in attendance or punctuality, in cases where there is concern, stickers and/or praise and encouragement may be given to the pupil to promote continued improvement. Individual reward charts may be set up with children to help improve punctuality.

The Headteacher will monitor attendance on an on-going basis and parents/carers will receive a copy of their child's attendance record with their annual report, when there are concerns, or on request. Meetings with parents/carers will be arranged when concerns continue over a half-term or if there is an urgent concern.

Parenting Contracts

A parenting contract is a voluntary written agreement, between parents/carers and the school, as a result of a fixed term exclusion and/or irregular attendance. The contract will include a statement from the school to provide specific support, plus a statement from parents/carers agreeing to comply for a specified period of time with the requirements asked of them by the school. The contract will be used where it is felt that parental influence could be used to improve the situation.

Parenting contracts for attendance:

This may be considered following at least half a term of MAST involvement. A meeting will be held with all agencies invited along with the parents/carers of the child. The contract will be managed by the school and the MAST worker and/or Attendance and Inclusion Officer will have input to the content by way of the requirements and any support which may be offered regarding attendance.

The Parenting contract agreement will include:

- A statement from the parent/carer agreeing to comply with the contract
- A statement from the school agreeing to provide specified support for the purpose of complying with the contract
- The views of the pupil where appropriate
- The timescale for the contract, agreed by all those taking part

Parenting Orders:

A Parenting Order will be applied for through the Magistrates Courts where:

- The parent/carer has been unwilling to engage with the school on a voluntary basis and they are considered by the school/Local Authority to be a significant factor in the child's behaviour/attendance
- The parent/carer has failed to sign or comply with a Parenting Contract

Policy formulation and review:

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for this policy and it will be reviewed in Spring 2021.

Attendance Monitoring cycle

Half termly monitoring

1. Admin officer: Half term attendance data list and full year data list for each class printed
2. Admin officer: Registration sheets (full year from Sept and last year if in Autumn term %) for all under 95% in half term printed
3. Headteacher to go through attendance file for each child who has been monitored since summer term of previous year
4. Headteacher: to go through registration sheets printed and list of half termly attendance ~ identify issues:
 - where a child has had a number of absences/late arrivals
 - Where a child has had the same day of week off several times
 - Where a child's attendance is under 90% for half term
 - Where a child is under 95% for half term and under 90% for full year
5. Headteacher: To decide whether to monitor internally, send out monitoring letter, send out appointment letter, send out appointment letter, refer to MAST, send out praise letter. Record in attendance file

Admin Officer:

1. Each Half term or when regular absences or lateness recorded to print of attendance sheets for headteacher.

Headteacher:

1. Number of lates/absences: letter sent home
2. Pattern of absences: Letter sent home
3. Under 90% for first time with neither of above: Monitor
4. Under 95% half term and 90% full year first time: Monitor
5. Previous monitoring and under 95% in half term: Letter sent home
6. Previous letter sent and under 95%/ continuation of issue in half term: meeting arranged
7. Not attended appointment/no improvement: meeting arranged with Attendance Officer
8. Improvement in attendance to over 95% when monitored last half term: praise letter
9. List of children to be monitored (including those where letters sent) given to Admin Officer with children identified to not have absences authorised without medical evidence.

Admin Officer:

1. Each Half term stickers for 95% to 100% and termly certificates for 100%

Headteacher:

1. Where 100% for year to date letters sent to pupils
2. Improvement praise letters sent to parent where previously monitored and attendance improved
3. 95% plus attendance reward and letter sent to children in December and July linked to schemes available

Equality Impact Assessment

Name of policy or project being assessed?	Date
Attendance	January 2018

Priority Level	
High	x
Medium	
Low	

Lead Officer: Helen Stokes
Members of the assessment team: Helen Stokes & Suzanne Marriott
Others involved in the assessment (peer review/external challenge): All staff, Governor Steering Group members,
What are the aims of the policy or project?
Aim: to make children feel happy and secure in their environment so that each child can grow socially, emotionally, intellectually and morally. Regular attendance and punctuality are key elements in meeting these aims and in raising achievement. It is important to work in partnership with parents/carers, the community and other professionals to secure good attendance and punctuality for all our pupils.
Who is the intended customer/service user of this project or policy?
Staff, children and families
What are the desired outcomes from this project or policy?
To ensure that all children regularly attend school and that the school follow their statutory duties
List any other key policies, procedures, projects or strategies that this policy/project has implications on: Medicines in school policy, medical needs policy, asthma, SEN, behaviour, anti-bullying, anti-racist, race equality, equal opportunities, education of sick children, headlice control, management of sickness absence, term time leave

What are the racial, disability and gender equality implications of the policy or project?

To ensure that attendance is not adversely affected by race, gender, disability or medical need/ or children are not adversely treated when attendance is affected by the afore mentioned

To grant leave for religious observation

<p>Does the policy or project have any significant positive impact for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Different racial groups ▪ Disabled persons ▪ Men and women ▪ Boys and girls 	<p>Yes ~ granting leaves for religious observations & education of sick children</p>
<p>Does the policy or project have any significant adverse impact for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Different racial groups ▪ Disabled persons ▪ Men and women ▪ Boys and girls 	<p>NO~ This policy and it's links with others ensures that procedures are in place so that there are no adverse effects</p>
<p>Do you have any evidence?</p>	
<p>Is there any way that you could reduce or eliminate the adverse impact or increase positive impact?</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Action to take :</p>	
<p>If you have indicated there is a negative impact, can it be justified? N/A</p>	<p>YES NO</p>
<p>If you have indicated there is a negative impact and it cannot be justified, is it discrimination? N/A</p>	<p>YES NO</p>
<p>If you have answered YES, please list all the changes that you have made to eliminate this discrimination:</p>	
<p>Please state how will you monitor the policy or project?: Policy review (by staff/governors by dates on policy)</p>	
<p>Signed (Person completing the form):</p>	<p>Date: 11.1.18</p>