

Yardley Wood Community Primary School

Attendance Policy



**Autumn 2024
To be reviewed Autumn 2025**

Yardley Wood Community Primary School – Attendance Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. At Yardley Wood Community Primary School we aim to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality at school.
- 1.2 It is a government legal requirement that all children attend school for 190 days every academic year. It is also a government requirement that as a school, Yardley Wood Community Primary School monitors attendance and applies the legal requirement.
- 1.3 Yardley Wood Community Primary School is striving to achieve the Primary School standard of every pupil achieving a minimum of 96.4% attendance each academic year. The school recognise that good attendance is imperative in raising standards and pupil attainment.
- 1.4 Good attendance in school is important because:
- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
 - Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
 - Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
 - Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
 - Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary, school, and higher education, employment or training.
- 1.1 This policy is written with the above statements in mind and underpins our school values to:
- Support pupils and their parents/carers
 - Promote pupil welfare and safeguarding
 - Ensure that pupils succeed and realise their potential at school
 - Ensure the highest possible level of attendance and punctuality
 - Ensure every pupil has access to a full time education which they are entitled to.
- 1.2 As a school we will work with and encourage parents/carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

2. Aims

- 2.1 As a school Yardley Wood Community Primary School aims to:

- Encourage and secure good attendance in line with government targets for all primary school pupils
- Reduce the percentage of unauthorised absence
- Reduce the number of pupils taking term time leave
- Reduce the number of pupils considered persistent absentees
- Reward pupils whose attendance is good
- Recognise those who have improved their attendance
- Work with parents/carers and other agencies to support those pupils for whom attendance is a concern.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Responsibilities of the school's attendance leader

- A member of the senior leadership team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person in Yardley Wood Community Primary School is the Assistant Headteacher who ensures that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed, whilst also ensuring that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.
- If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.
- The school's attendance leader manages the pastoral team who oversee all pupils for whom attendance is a concern and reports attendance to the Governing Board on a termly basis.

3.2 Responsibilities of classroom staff

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the attendance leader on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

3.3 Responsibilities of pupils

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time.
- Go to their class on time.

3.4 Responsibilities of parents/carers

- Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.
- Parents will:
 - inform the school on the first day of absence
 - discuss with the class teacher/member of the pastoral team any planned absences well in advance
 - support the school with their child in aiming for good attendance each year
 - make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone or text on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable
 - avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
 - only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

4. Registers

- 4.1 The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child attends the school at which they are registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that their child attends that school then the parent is guilty of an offence.
- 4.2 When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the appropriate register code will be used.
- 4.3 We are required by law to undertake attendance registers of pupils twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session. Registers are legal documents.
- 4.4 Yardley Wood Community Primary School expects parents/carers to ensure that children are on the school premises by 8.55 am for the day. The morning register closes at 9.30am: pupils arriving between 8.55 and 9.30 will be marked with an L indicating they are late for school. However pupils arriving after the register has closed will be registered with a U showing they are present in school but were late enough to considerably affect their learning. A U code indicates an unauthorised absence.

5. Types of Absence

- 5.1 Absence from school will either be recorded as authorised (with permission) or unauthorised (without permission)

5.2 Authorised Absence

- Authorised absence is where the school have given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for the child's absence from school.
- Absence may be authorised for the following reasons:
 - Illness, medical or dental appointments
 - Days of religious observance
 - Exclusion
 - Traveller child travelling for the purposes of parents' employment
 - Family bereavement
 - Involvement in a public performance
 - Exceptional circumstances (the nature of such will be determined by the school on an individual basis.)

5.3 Unauthorised absence

- Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.
- Unauthorised absence examples include
 - Where no explanation is offered by parent/carer
 - The explanation offered is unsatisfactory (i.e. shopping / waiting for delivery etc)
 - Family holidays (unless granted under exceptional circumstances).

5.4 The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, on the day specifically set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent/carer is a member and this will be marked as 'R' in the register. Parents/carers must notify the school should they wish to apply for a day of religious observance for their child.

6. Term Time Leave

6.1 There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school during term time.

6.2 Any applications for leave of absence must be made in advance using the 'Leave Request' form and any request can only be authorised where school accepts there are exceptional circumstances.

6.3 Term time leave (holidays during term time) will not be granted unless the Headteacher considers there to be exceptional circumstances. Leave in term time will never be authorised:

- during the first term, when a pupil is just starting at School, as it is very important for the child to settle into their new class;
- during an assessment/test period – Key Stage 2 SATs

- when a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence
- 6.4 Leave in term time significantly affects pupil attendance, impacting on progress and attainment and is discouraged at all times.
- 6.5 Yardley Wood Community Primary School makes use of the Local Authority's fining process in applying for Penalty Notices (fines) for parents who choose to take pupils out of school for leave during term time.
- 6.6 Parents/carers risk losing their child's place on the School Roll if the pupil does not return to school on the agreed date of return and re-admission cannot be guaranteed as defined in legislation: The specific circumstances which outline when a pupil can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (f) (i-iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (amended 2013).

7. Persistent Absence

- 7.1 A pupil is considered a persistent absentee if their absence is 10% or more (their overall attendance percentage being less than 90%) regardless of whether or not the absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- 7.2 Parents/carers of those pupils who are classed as persistent absentees at Yardley Wood Community Primary School are invited to a meeting with a member of the Pastoral Team to discuss concerns around attendance, ascertain whether support is required and put an action plan in place to reduce further absence of the pupil.
- 7.3 If the school considers it necessary the Support First process will be utilised to seek Penalty Notices for parents of pupils whose attendance is an ongoing concern.

8. Support First Process

- 8.1 The law gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/ carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others.
- 8.2 Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school and those absences are classed as unauthorised.

- 8.3 Yardley Wood Community Primary School does make use of the Local Authority's process to pursue Penalty Notices for parents/carers of those pupils who either: take leave in term time, or, those who have significant periods of unauthorised absences.
- 8.4 Parents are invited to an Early Help meeting prior to Support First commencing to ascertain if, with targeted support, attendance could improve without the need for Support First to be followed.
- 8.5 The Pastoral Team, led by the Assistant Headteacher manage all Early Help and Support First cases at Yardley Wood Community Primary School.

9. Managing Attendance

- 9.1 Attendance at Yardley Wood Community Primary School is managed by Senior Leaders and the Pastoral Team and overseen by the Governing Body who support the school in the ways in which attendance is managed.
- 9.2 All parents/carers are advised of expectations in terms of attendance during their admission meeting with school.
- 9.3 Yardley Wood Community Primary School aims to work with parents/carers when issues have been identified surrounding attendance in order to improve it for a pupil. Support is offered to both parents and pupils in raising attendance in school.
- 9.4 If a pupil is absent from school, Yardley Wood Community Primary School operates a first day calling response. This means that school will attempt to contact a parent/carer on the first day of absence to ascertain reason for the absence. Then a decision is made whether this absence will be coded as authorised or unauthorised.
- 9.5 If a parent/carer cannot be contacted and school have concerns surrounding the safeguarding of a pupil, a home visit will be undertaken, without notification. Home visits are also undertaken when no contact with a parent/carer has been made for a number of consecutive days for any absent child.
- 9.6 Referrals are made to the CME (Children Missing in Education) Team within the Local Authority when children are absent and their whereabouts unknown.
- 9.7 Yardley Wood Community Primary School offer the chance to earn incentive rewards weekly and those children who have attended for 100% of the previous week are entered into this opportunity.
- 9.8 Each term those pupils who have met the school target for the term are invited to attend a celebration event at the end of the term. Those pupils for whom school has evidence of medical conditions that have precluded a pupil from achieving the termly

target are not prevented from attending, providing their attendance (without medical appointments etc.) has been otherwise good.

9.9 Those children who have been identified as at risk of becoming a persistent absentee or those who are persistent absentees are provided with a member of the pastoral team who monitors their attendance daily and completes regular check-ins with the pupil to encourage and support their attendance at school.

9.10 Where attendance has been considered poor and an improvement has been made, letters and postcards celebrating this improvement are sent to parents and pupils.

9.11 Yardley Wood Community Primary School uses CPOMS (Child Protection On-line Management System) to record absence concerns/issues, Support First processes and Penalty notices. All data/information relating to absence is secure and confidential and accessible only by appropriate members of staff.

9.12 The school works with a number of external agencies for families that have been identified as having poor attendance amongst other concerns, and will refer to external agencies where it is considered that support could benefit parents and pupils in improving attendance.

Policy Written by: C Blackwood (Asst Headteacher / Attendance Lead)

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Policy adopted by the Governing Board:

Signed **Chair of the Governing Board**

Date: