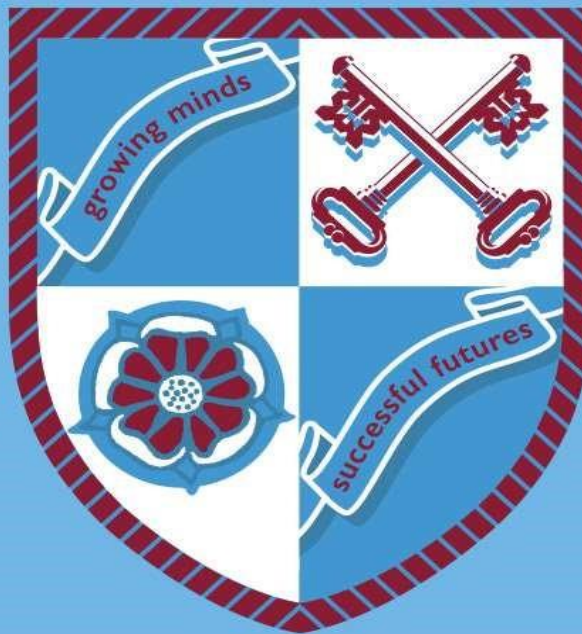




Warblington
School

Growing minds, successful futures

ATTENDANCE POLICY



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Approved by:	Full Governing Body	Date: 11 May 2021
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Prepared in partnership with Emsworth Primary School, St Albans CE Primary School, St James CE Primary School, Fairfield Infant School, Bidbury Junior School and Bidbury Infant School

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Section 1 Introduction

Aims of the policy:

- To help fulfil our mission statement by ensuring children's full attendance at school
- To ensure that parents understand their responsibility regarding their child's attendance
- To inform parents of the school's approach to dealing with absence and punctuality
- To ensure that all school staff understand their responsibilities regarding attendance

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our students and endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome. Parents and students play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents/Carers and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered, it is vital that they are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

This policy sets out how, together, we will achieve this.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%, with regular attenders making 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 Post-16 education, employment or training
- Learning: Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning

Legislation and guidance

School attendance is subject to various education laws and Warblington schools Attendance Policy is written to reflect those laws, and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE) and Hampshire County Council.

This policy meets the requirements of the [School Attendance Guidance](#) and associated COVID-19 addendum from the DfE, and also refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the [DfE Guidance on the School Census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold

DfE School Attendance (2019)

Schools should:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (below 92%).
- Ensure every child has access to full time education.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents/carers are to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age, who are registered to a school, attend regularly.

All students must be punctual to their lessons.

Safeguarding

Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and, within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for all children encompasses:

- attendance
- behaviour management
- health and safety
- access to the curriculum
- anti-bullying

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis could be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Promoting Regular Attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and the student. The Warblington Home/School agreement contains details of how we will work with parents/carers and our expectations of what they will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance. We ask each parent and child to sign that they agree on entry to the school.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- provide information on all matters related to attendance in our newsletter and on our website
- report to parents/carers on how their child(ren) is/are performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments - this information is also available through Classcharts
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance through weekly assemblies and certificates
- Set targets for the school, classes and individual students for attendance and display these in the school.

Section 2 Roles and Responsibilities

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents/carers, students and all members of school staff.

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 will also oversee the school's Attendance Officer to ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. They will work together with tutors and Year Leaders to ensure 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, even if due to a prolonged period of sickness, we will ask for medical evidence to be provided. The Attendance Officer or Year Leader will discuss with parent/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 student's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school**.

Responsibilities of Tutors and Classroom Staff:

- Ensure that all students are consistently registered accurately
- Promote & reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with their Year Leader and/or the Attendance officer on matters of attendance and punctuality
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a student's absence.

Responsibilities of Students:

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time.
- Go to all their registrations and lessons on time.
- Take responsibility for registering with the Attendance Officer or reception if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:

It is a parent/carers legal responsibility (section 576 of the Education Act 1996) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school is an offence in law.

Parents/Carers will:

- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Inform the school on the first day of absence.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by phone or email on the first **and subsequent days** of absence
- 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

Section 3 Recording Attendance

The school day runs from 8.35am-3.00pm.

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day at 8.35am and again for the afternoon session at 2.00pm (11.25am on Tuesdays).

Lateness /Punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of school/lessons are used to give out instructions or organise work. If students are late they can miss work, time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and can feel embarrassed, leading to possible further absence.

- The school day begins at 8.35am with a tutor session and **all students are expected to be in school at this time.**
- The register officially closes 15 minutes after the start time (8.50am).
- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence, code 'U' in line with Hampshire and DfE guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.
- If a student is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Parents/carers are advised that, where possible, medical/dental appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Students who are late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other students. Students who are recorded as late twice within the same week will be issued with an after-school detention on the day of the second late. On-going and persistent lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence** and will be subject to legal action (see Section 4 for further detail).

Parents/carers of students who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period, the school, on behalf of Hampshire County Council, will be required to issue parents with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) in accordance with Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for non-attendance (See Section 4 of this policy for further detail).

What parents/carers should do if their child is absent

A student not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. If a child is going to be absent, parents/carers must contact the school as soon as possible on the first and each subsequent day of absence. Calls should be made to the absence line on 02392 475480 or an email sent to y.matthews@warblingtonschool.co.uk.

If a student is absent we will:

- Register and code the absence accordingly
- Contact parents/carers during the morning session on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them; *This is because we have a duty to ensure a child's safety as well as their regular school attendance*
- Invite parents/carers in to discuss the situation if absences persist, including completing an attendance action plan where attendance falls below 92%
- Refer the matter to the Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panel if absences are unauthorised and attendance falls below 92%.

Third Day Absence

Please Note: If a child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parent/carers, after three days of absence the Attendance Officer will be required to make a home visit to ascertain the well-being of the child and the reason for the absence. We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends and/ or wider family. Warblington School complies with [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020](#) safeguarding advice regarding children who are missing in education.

Ten Day Absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any student who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Parents/carers are asked to help us to help by ensuring

that we always have at least two **up to date contact details of more than one person**. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the school of any changes.

Continued or Ongoing Absence

If a child misses 8%, or 24 sessions, or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason they are defined as **persistent absentees**. Absence at this level will do considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents/carers full support and co-operation to tackle this. The school will meet with parents/carers and the student to discuss reasons for absence and formulate a plan for improving attendance levels moving forward.

Absence disadvantages a child by creating gaps in their learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the DfE. If a student has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 92% we will contact parents/carers and, depending on the reasons for the absence, will invite them in to meet with their child's Year Leader to draw up a support plan.

COVID Related absence and Online learning

Following on from the periods of enforced lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic, all work set during the school day is uploaded onto Classcharts and can be accessed from home by any student absent from school. Unless the student is too poorly to complete the work, the expectation is that all work set by the class teachers during the day should be completed and the work submitted to the class teacher. This particularly applies where students might have an enforced period of absence having been identified as a close contact of an individual with a positive COVID-19 case. Further details around remote learning expectations can be found in our Remote Learning Policy. Where absence is linked to a COVID-19 case, students will be 'X' coded as per the [DfE School Attendance Guidance COVID-19 Addendum](#). This period of absence does not count towards overall attendance figures.

Request for Leave of Absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013, stating that **Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances**.

It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, or unavoidable which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is however, no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday and **in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised**. Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form available from the school office or the website well in advance of the date(s) and before making any travel arrangements.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence **will be unauthorised** and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Hampshire's Code of Conduct parent/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine, or other legal action in accordance the code (see Section 4 for details).

Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups.

Section 4 Fixed Penalty Notices and other Legal Measures

Classifying absences

The DfE requires every half-day absence from school to be classified (by the school) as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about each absence is always required. With regard to determining authorised/unauthorised absence, the school is required to follow strict guidelines laid down by the DfE.

- **Authorised Absence:** These are morning or afternoons away from school when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised. An explanation offered by a parent/carers does not have to be accepted as grounds for authorisation and some additional assurances, such as written evidence, may be requested.
- **Unauthorised Absence:** These are absences when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a student's leave of absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:
 - parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily such as for shopping, birthdays or to look after siblings
 - truancy before or during the school day
 - absences which have not been explained
- **Lateness:** Students must attend on time to be given a mark in the register for that session, unless the lateness is unavoidable.

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

Fixed Penalty Notices

In Education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school. Hampshire Schools and Hampshire County Council use the full range of legal measures to secure good

attendance. All schools are required to work with Hampshire County Council to take legal action if:

- A student has unauthorised absences for 10 or more sessions (5 days) within a given 100 day period
- A student is continually late to school and this lateness is unauthorised for 10 or more sessions
- A student has any unauthorised absences during any formal examinations, assessment or testing
- Non-approved leave of absence (holiday)

The following legal measures are for students of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- Parenting orders
- Fixed Penalty notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

Further information is available from [Hampshire County Council Attendance Guidance](#)

Written Warning

Parents/Carers will be warned of the likelihood of a penalty notice being issued for unauthorised absence via a letter. The Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued **to one or more parent/carers** for each child. **N.B** This could mean four penalty notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday i.e. one FPN for each child to each parent

Each penalty notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the penalty notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the Penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid then Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of Penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

Further information, support and guidance is available within the [guidance leaflet for parents and carers](#) issued by Hampshire County Council. This leaflet accompanies all written warning letters issued by the school.

Section 5 Support and Extenuating Circumstances

Students are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the student.

Parents/carers are advised that if their child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Parents/carers are encouraged to contact their child's form tutor/ Year Leader immediately and openly discuss any concerns. A student could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for a student's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases we may advise that the circumstances of a student's difficulties are discussed with professionals from another agency.

Leavers

When students leave Warblington School (other than leaving at the end of Year 11), parents are asked to provide the school with comprehensive information about their plans including any date of a house move, new address and telephone numbers, the child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted in writing.

If students leave and we do not have the above information, then they are considered to be a 'Child Missing in Education'. This requires schools and Local Authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate the child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By providing the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Absence through participation in Public Performances

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as an authorised absence.

Absence through competing in Sport.

Parents of representative athletes can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a regional, county, national or international event/competition. It is however, down to the Headteachers discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for a child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions are also at the discretion of the Headteacher and are not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families

For further advice and guidance on Attendance & GRT and Showman Families see County Guidance at: <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-Section6.pdf>

Absence of a child from a traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for **work purposes only** and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code.

Teenage Pregnancy

Support will be directed to keeping a student in school and wherever possible her return to full time education as soon as possible after the birth. A student who becomes pregnant should be allowed no more than 18 weeks authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the child. After that time, any absence should be treated as unauthorised.