



WADHAM SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Approved by Governors.....

Date: 27 April 2017

Rationale

Good attendance is the cornerstone of success and fulfillment in every students' school experience and Wadham seeks to ensure there are no barriers preventing any child from coming to school regularly and on time.

All students should aim for 100% attendance and to encourage this we offer incentives at our termly rewards Assembly and special recognition for any students who achieve 100% attendance for the whole of Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11.

We do this because we know that good attendance is linked to good learning. Research demonstrates that when attendance drops below 95% progress is affected and students become at risk of not fulfilling their potential.

Somerset County Council (SCC) supports schools:

- In expecting parents and carers to make sure that children and young people attend school regularly. Any absence from school will impact on educational achievement, success in later life and longer term health and well being
- In ensuring the law is upheld. Parents and carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance at school of their child. Schools must explain their stance on term time leave in their attendance policy so parents/carers are clear on expectations and potential consequences, such as any unauthorised absence including taking term time leave not agreed with the school, can result in a Penalty Notice being issued to each parent for each child. Any Penalty Notice unpaid is taken to Magistrates Court as failure to secure the regular attendance of their child. If found guilty of such an offence, they might receive a criminal conviction and a potential fine of up to £1,000

Understanding types of absence

There are two sessions of learning each day – morning and afternoon. The register taken in tutor time (am) and in Period 5 (pm) and is scrutinised daily.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing or via Parent Mail.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness or medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and /or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the student. If a child is reluctant to attend, parents are encouraged to work with school to tackle any issues that may be preventing good attendance.

How we manage lateness

The school day starts at 8.30am and we expect students to be in tutorial at that time.

Registers are marked by 8.35am and students will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 8.50am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a student arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorized absence. This may mean that parents could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If a student has a persistent late record parents will be asked to meet with school staff to resolve the problem. Three late marks in any school week will result in an after school detention for the student. Parents are encouraged to approach the school at any time if they are having problems getting a student to school on time.

Categories of Authorised Absence

- **Approved Education Activities Off-site**

The absence of students to take part in supervised education activities outside of the school but authorised by the school is recorded as “approved educational activity” such as:

- field trips and education visits
- participation in or attendance at approved sporting activities
- Wadham will discuss with partner schools decisions regarding authorisation that affect families with a student at more than one school in our partnership

- **Temporary School Closures**

For school days where the whole school has to close due to severe weather conditions (eg floods/snow), heating failure, fire or structural damage the school follows local authority advice on recording attendance.

- **Deleting Pupils from the School Roll**

A student can be removed from the school roll if moving to another area or school.

The school will find out the name and address of the new school and when the student will start and confirm this information with the receiving school. When a school transfer form has been completed and Somerset LA informed the student’s name can be removed. Students are also deleted from the roll as follows:

- When a parent informs the school **IN WRITING** that they are removing their child (it is incumbent on the school to inform the LA).
- Permanent exclusion
- Death of the child

Supporting good attendance

School meets fortnightly with the local authority’s Education Welfare Service to identify concerns around attendance. Where appropriate our allocated officer works with home and school to remove barriers with the aim of avoiding the necessity for legal action. In cases where involvement of EWS fails to secure improvement in attendance the EWS are likely to prosecute

Persistent Absence

Students who miss 10% of their learning through absence are deemed by Government to be Persistently Absent. PA students are monitored and supported where appropriate.

The school is responsible for setting work for an excluded student who remains on the school roll.

- **Traveller child when the family is travelling**

To help ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller Children, dual registration means that the school will not remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are traveling.

While the Traveller is away the school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised.

- **Family Bereavement**

The school will respond sensitively to requests to attend funerals or associated events and has the discretion to authorise such absences.

- **Family Prison Visits**

The school will authorise requests for absence which will enable the child to visit his or her parent in prison.

- **Special Occasions**

The school will consider each request individually. Only exceptional occasions warrant leave of absence. For example, attending the wedding of a family member may be acceptable but a day out of school for a student's birthday or for shopping will not.

The school will also take into account the nature of the event; its frequency (is it a one-off or likely to become a regular occurrence?); whether the parent gave advance notice; and the student's overall attendance pattern.

- **Public performances including film or TV work**

The school will allow absence for a student to take part in a public performance. Agreed participation will be an authorised absence.

- **Ethnic Minorities**

The Equal Opportunities Policy provides separate data for monitoring the attendance of all students on roll who have an ethnic minority background.

Roles and Responsibilities

- All staff are required to promote good punctuality and attendance
- Tutors and teachers are required to maintain accurate records and to raise any emerging concerns with parents, each other and/or the Attendance Officer. Tutors work with the Attendance officer to pursue reasons for absence

- The Attendance Officer has responsibility for maintaining accurate records, pursuing reasons for absence and medical evidence, liaising with EWS and Senior colleagues and supporting parents and other colleagues to ensure good attendance.
- A member of the Senior Team will oversee the work of the Attendance Officer.
- Parents and guardians have legal responsibility to ensure their children attend regularly and on time. School seeks to support families in the discharge of this duty, whenever possible.
- Students in an Upper School such as Wadham are increasingly able to take responsibility themselves for attending school and will be encouraged to do so through PSHE and Assemblies in school

Term Time Leave:

Headteachers can only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Any request for leave must be made in writing for the attention of the Headteacher at least 4 weeks in advance and certainly before any travel arrangements or bookings are made.

Examples of exceptional circumstances include:

- Forces staff returning from lengthy active service abroad.
- Police, Fire Service staff, whose leave is allocated rather than selected.
- In the case of the terminal illness of a close family member, especially if the family member lives overseas.
- Somerset County Council cannot override a school's decision not to authorise any term time leave and there is no right of appeal

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs W. Abbott Attendance Officer
 Mrs Jackson, Deputy Headteacher
 Mrs Forsey (6th form)

Other Agencies Involved

The following agencies will also become involved as appropriate:

- Education Welfare Officer
- Educational Psychologist
- LA Casework officer
- Children Looked After Team
- Traveller Education
- Complex Case Panel
- Medical Needs Panel

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.