Wardley CE Primary School
Attendance Policy

Name of Reviewer	Mark Foster
Date of Approval of Governing Body	October 2023
Signature of Chair	*John Storey*
Signature of Head	*Mark Foster*
Date Due for Review	October 2024

EQUALITY STATEMENT

As a school we welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010. The general duties are to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations

We review all policies and procedures we operate to ensure there are no negative equality impacts based on the following protected characteristics: age, disability, ethnicity & race, gender (sex), gender identity & reassignment, pregnancy & maternity, sexual orientation, religion & belief and non-belief as outlined in the Equality Act 2010. If you feel, on reading this policy that there may be a negative equality impact, please tell us about this. Please also let us know if you need to access this policy in a different format. You can do this by contacting the school office.

Our school vision

We are a Church of England school that values and recognises the uniqueness of each individual child and acknowledges their fundamental right to be educated to their full potential in a safe, secure and caring environment. Our ethos is built on Christian foundations and drives our belief that we can do all things.

Wardley CE Primary School is committed to continual improvement to ensure that what we do today is even better tomorrow. We provide a happy, secure and supportive learning environment where the children develop independence and work hard to make the most of their talents, and that 'We can do all things' within a deep and rich curriculum.

We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. Phillippians 4:13

Practical ways in which we attempt to carry out our school vision

Through the Christian value of respect:
-Having strong ethics to underpin our decision making and actions.
-Creating an environment which promotes the Christian ethos of trust, respect and honesty to enable people to flourish.
-Promoting a sense of justice.
-Creating a strong moral purpose which underpins everything we do

Through the Christian value of friendship:
-Having an inclusive ethos to create a school in which everyone is welcome and everyone is equal.
-In celebrating diversity we value the strengths of all and embrace differences.
-Engaging stakeholders within and beyond the school.

Through the Christian value of trust:
-Having a strong sense of teamwork amongst all members of the school community.
-No matter how small, we value every contribution and support each other to reach our goals.
-In respecting each other, we strive to not let each other down.
-In feeling valued and empowered people have a desire to go the extra mile.

Through the Christian value of courage
-Recognising, supporting and developing everyone's potential.
-Nurturing skills and promoting opportunities.
-Creating an environment for people to think positively and take risks.

Through the Christian value of perseverance:
-Through continual enhancement we are constantly striving to achieve high standards, we never stand still.
-All improvements are underpinned with high aspirations.
-When problems arise, we must hold on to our vision and find solutions.
-We inspire and innovate and we support others to do the same.

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance - the school's attendance target 96.1%
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and 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:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- The terms of reference for the Pupil Welfare & School Community Sub-Committee sets out their role and responsibilities for monitoring the school's attendance policy and practice and the effectiveness of its impact on a termly basis.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the headteacher (Mark Foster) and he can be contacted via the school office or email.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is the school business manager (Paula Statham) and she can be contacted via the school office or email.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers have responsibility for attendance issues in school.

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.

3.6 School Office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the attendance officer or the designated senior leader for attendance in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance if this is required.

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.

- Call the school or use School Spider to report their child's absence before 9.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils in Reception to Y6 must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The school day for the nursery pupils starts at 8.55am.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken at the start of the afternoon session (KS1 & Lower KS2: 12.45pm. EYFS: 1pm. Upper KS2: 1.15pm.)and will be kept open for 30 minutes from this time.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30 am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

Details about a child's absence can be communicated via the school office or school spider.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents/carers can collect a leave of absence letter from the office.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

The school day, for the children from Reception to Y6, starts at 8.45am and we expect the children to be in class by that time. The main gates onto the school site open at 8.30am. All the classroom doors, for the classes from Reception to Y6, are open from 8.40am and the children can go straight into class to start their work. The main gates, that allow access to the classrooms from reception to Y6, are closed at 8.45am. If your child arrives on the school site after 8.45am they must come into the school building via the main reception doors. This indicates that your child is late and will be recorded as late on the register. The school day for nursery children starts at 8.55am.

At 9.15am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child 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 unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the designated senior leader for attendance and/or the attendance officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Text the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Text the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer or police.
- If there are concerns over unexplained absence then the school, or the Local Authority, will make a home visit to check on the child.
- The school will also consider inviting parents/carers in to discuss the situation. This could involve our education welfare officer, designated senior leader for attendance and/or the attendance officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through a half-termly attendance letter.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as

- **Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling** – Head teachers should use their discretion having heard from parents about travel and funeral arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled
- **Sudden loss of housing** through eviction or domestic violence- up to a maximum of 3 days.
- **Serious illness of a close relative** – only if Head teacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional

- **Out of school programmes** such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement and agreed by the LA – as appropriate.
- **Time- off relating to Child Entertainment Performances**, subject to a license being issued by Education Social Work Service
- **Religious observance** – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states ''on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs''.
- **Weddings of parents and siblings** – weddings can be arranged at weekends or during school holidays; however we acknowledge that there are times when the dates are dependent on other factors, such as the needs of the couple getting married. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that here is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave, for example where natural parents are separated, and in new relationships and it may cause a child further difficulties if he/she is excluded from a wedding. Each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

What are not considered exceptional circumstances?

- **Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative**, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- **Pilgrimages by parents** (eg. Hajj). These are rare but can result in children being away from school for significant periods of time (at least 5 days). They are not regarded as exceptional as children themselves do not perform Hajj, but tend to travel with their parents when they go.
- **Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments**.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. All requests for leave of absence during term time must be put in writing. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

The parents/carers will be informed by letter of any decision made regarding the request for leave of absence.

Should the request be declined by the Head Teacher and the parent / carer continue to take the holiday, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. This could lead to a request being made to the Local Authority for the implementation of a fixed penalty fine. This will be dependent on the length of absence.

In accordance with the Local Authority code of practice a fine can be implemented for 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a given period (the school sees this as a term).

Penalty Notices are always issued per parent/per child and are £60.00 if paid within 21 days rising to £120.00 if paid between 21 and 28 days.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school has a range of strategies for rewarding and improving attendance. These include:

- **Attendance Certificates:** These are presented at the end of each term for good attendance. These recognise attendance over 96% (green certificate) and 100% (gold certificate). There are also certificates for improved attendance.
- **Attendance Badges:** These are presented at the end of each term for good attendance. These recognise attendance over 96% (good attendance badge) and 100% (100% attendance badge). There are also badges for improved attendance.
- **Attendance Mascot:** Each week in the Friday Thanks-giving worship the class with the best attendance will receive the school's attendance mascot (Barney The Bear)

to keep for the week. Details on class attendance are published in the school newsletter each week.

- Promoting good attendance in school through discussion with the pupils about the importance of good attendance and its links to the school's vision and the values of our 'Wardley Way'.

7. Attendance monitoring

The school monitors and analyses attendance and absence data on a weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly basis to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Use the DfE Pupil Attendance and Absence in Schools in England Data Dashboard to provide a national comparison figure.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Local Authority support for improving attendance

Salford's Education Welfare Service has been through a co-design and in accordance with the DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance Guidance has now become The School Attendance Team.

The School Attendance Team now has 4 Attendance Advisors who will provide statutory support to all Salford Schools split across the localities, alongside a team of Education Welfare Officers, now known as Attendance Officers, who will continue to provide SLA based support to Salford Schools within each locality, who buy into the service.

Wardley CE Primary School is supported by the North locality attendance advisor.

In addition to completing the termly Targeting Support Meetings with the Attendance Lead, the Attendance Advisor will manage a team of Attendance Officers who will cover all schools that buy into the SLA in that locality.

Wardley CE Primary School buys into this SLA and receives support from a named Attendance Officer.

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence (PA) is where a pupil misses 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. This means missing 38 or more sessions (equivalent to 19 or more days) a year through absence. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

Severe absence (SA) is where a pupil misses 50% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. This means missing 190 or more sessions (equivalent to 95 or more days) a year through absence. Absence at this level is doing significant damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.
- The parents/carers of any child that reaches the 'at risk' attendance threshold of 91.99% is informed of this immediately via a school attendance risk letter. This is to give them the opportunity to improve attendance before falling below 90% and being classed as persistently absent.

- The parents/carers of any child that reaches the PA mark is informed of this immediately via a school PA letter. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our weekly attendance tracking system. The parents/carers of PA pupils are asked for medical evidence to be provided for any absence to be authorised. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice/fine. All PA cases are reviewed on a termly basis by the school's attendance team and, where necessary, the school's educational welfare officer is involved.

- Where a child has 6 or more unauthorised absences they will be invited into school for an attendance panel meeting with the attendance lead and headteacher. The focus will be on working together to improve the child's attendance and to avoid further unauthorised absence that could lead to a penalty notice being issued.

- When a child has 8 unauthorised absences then a warning letter is sent out explaining that 2 further unauthorised absences will lead to a penalty notice being considered.

- When a child has 10 unauthorised absences then a penalty notice will be considered, as outlined in Section 5.2 Legal Sanctions.

- Where improvements are made then improved attendance letters are sent out.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum on an annual basis by pupil welfare and school community sub-committee. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day