

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Welley Road  
Wraysbury, Staines  
TW19 5DJ

Headteacher: Mrs A Fox

Produced by:  
Approved by:  
Review date:

**Alison Fox**  
**Community and Pupil Welfare Committee**

# Attendance Policy

This is a brief summary of the main points of our attendance policy. Our attendance policy aims to:

- Support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning.
- Enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through school.
- Make parents/carers aware of their legal requirements.

## Being at School

School education lays the vital foundation of a child's life. Irregular attendance can severely impede academic and social development. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer.

## School Times

The gates open at 8.40 am. **The school day begins at 9.00am.** Pupils must be in their classroom before **9.00am** for registration and not just coming in through the school gates. Lunchtime registration is at **12.45 for Foundation Stage, 1.00pm for Year 1, 1.15 for Year 2, 1.15 for Years 3, 1.30 for Year 4 and 1.45 for Years 5/6.** School finishes at **3.00 pm** for Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 and **3.10pm** for Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.

When a child arrives late it interrupts concentration and wastes valuable learning time. Children who arrive after the gates have been closed must be accompanied to the school office by the adult who brings them to school and the adult must sign them in giving a reason for why they are late. If a child arrives after the register closes (9.00 am), he/she will be marked late. If a child arrives after 9.30am it will be marked as unauthorised.

## Taking the Register

By law, schools must take a morning and an afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. Pupils' attendance and punctuality is recorded and will be passed on to future schools as necessary. During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day. If a pupil has to leave school for any reason during the school day, the parent/carer must contact the school with an explanation. Parents taking pupils out of school during the school day must sign them out at the school office.

## When a child is absent

By law, schools must record absences and the reasons given for these absences. Parents/carers must contact the school ideally before 9.00 am on the morning of the child's absence to let the school know why their child will be absent and continue to ring daily, if the child is still absent. If the school is not contacted, an unauthorised absence will be noted. The school will send a text and try to contact the parent/carer to try and find out why the child is not at school. The school will work down the list of contacts until they manage to speak to someone in order to ensure that the family is safe. The school has to produce regular attendance figures for the DfE. Unauthorised absences are investigated and taken up with the Education Welfare Officer. Examples of authorised absences:

- Genuine illness of the pupil (confirmation from a medical practitioner may be required)

- Specialist hospital or **urgent** dental appointment for the pupil
- Death of a near relative
- Religious observance (faith of the parents/carers)
- Traveller absence – which must be work business related and evidence provided

### **Unauthorised absences**

Absences such as for a holiday, a shopping trip, a birthday event, oversleeping due to a late night, not wanting to come into school, parent not being able to bring their child to school or looking after other children are all unauthorised.

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead considers that regular attendance at school is of such important that Penalty Notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs. See additional information attached.

### **Keeping the school informed**

Where possible we ask parents to let the school know in advance of any planned absences, eg hospital appointments. Where possible parents should make medical/dental appointments for out of school hours.

### **Leave of Absence**

The school does not authorise term time absences unless there are exceptional circumstances which prevent this. Requests for term time absence should be made at least 14 days before the start date. If a term time absence cannot be avoided parents should complete a **Request for Absence in Term Time** form. The Headteacher will then decide whether or not to authorise it (see attachments). This will depend on the pupil's record of attendance, levels of achievement and whether they will miss any special events, assessments or preparations for assessments. The statutory SATs for Year 2 and 6 take place during the Summer term as well as assessments for all the other year groups. There are also important assessments that take place particularly in November/March and at other key times in the year. Leave for exceptional circumstances may not be approved during these times.

### **Request for Absence in Term time Form**

This should be completed whenever a parents needs to request absence for a pupil, with the exception of a child becoming unwell and therefore unable to attend school, when the parents should ring in as above.

### **Holidays**

Leave of absence will not be given for holidays in term time and if taken may incur a fixed penalty notice.

### **Exceeding an Agreed Leave of Absence Period**

If a child fails to return to school after an agreed period of absence the Education Welfare Office may be informed. In extreme cases a pupil may be removed from the school roll and parents/carers would need to reapply for a place.

### **Monitoring**

The percentage attendance is monitored by the Borough Education Welfare Officer who makes half termly visits to the school. The figures for authorised and unauthorised absence are reported to the Borough and DfE. The school sends out letters to parents to make them aware of their child's attendance percentage.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed by the Governors every two years.

## **RBWM LETTER FOR ALL PARENTS FROM SCHOOLS**

Dear Parent/Carer,

The Local Authority has brought to the attention of every school in Windsor & Maidenhead the powers in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to tackle poor school attendance.

These came into force on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2004 and include Penalty Notices, which mean that for pupils with unauthorised absence from school (i.e any absences that the school has not given permission for) their parents/carers may be subject to a prompt fine of either £60 or £120.

Penalty Notices will be used as a deterrent to prevent a pattern of unauthorised absence developing. They will be issued simply by posting to a pupil's home after possibly just one warning and cases of absence without acceptable cause will also include pupils caught on truancy sweeps, unauthorised leave of absence in school term time and persistent late attendance after the Register has closed.

Letters about the arrival of Penalty Notices and how they might operate will be sent to the parents/carers of every pupil with a recorded unauthorised absence within this school year.

At Wraysbury Primary School we consider that regular attendance is so important and these legal powers are so significant, that we are now bringing this to the attention of every parent/carer with a child in this school. It means that any parent/carer of a pupil with a level of unauthorised absence may now have a potential liability in the form of a Penalty Notice issued by the Local Authority.

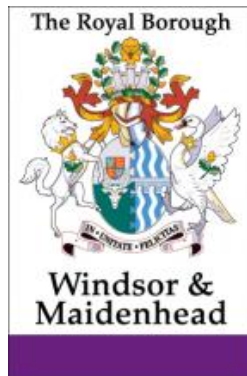
If you believe at any stage that your child's absence record from school may leave you liable to receive a Penalty Notice it is extremely important that you take action without delay to secure their regular attendance.

Support and guidance on attendance is always available and if you have any questions about this or if you need any help to achieve an improvement then please contact us to discuss the situation.

Advice and support can also be made available to you through the Education Welfare Service by contacting your local office.

Yours faithfully

Mrs A Fox  
Headteacher



# **THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD**

## **Penalty Notices to Address Poor Attendance at School**

### **The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003**

#### **Advice to Parents and Carers**

- ***What is the Anti- Social Behaviour Act 2003?***

Section 23 of the Act gives powers to the Local Education Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is considered capable of but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance.

The powers came into force on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2004.

- ***Why has it been introduced?***

Reducing absence 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 and can leave a pupil vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

Above all, missing school seriously affects children's longer term life opportunities.

- ***What is a Penalty Notice?***

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the school cannot or has not given permission). Depending on circumstances such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in Court whilst still securing an improvement in a pupil's attendance.

Payment of a Penalty Notice enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction.

- ***What are the costs?***

Payment within 21 days of receipt of a Notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this but within 28 days.

- ***How are they issued?***

By post to your home.

- ***When are they used?***

RBWM considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that Penalty Notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs:

Overt truancy (including pupils found during truancy sweeps);

Inappropriate parentally-condoned absence;

Holidays in term time or excessive delayed return from an extended holiday without prior school permission;

Persistent late arrival at school (after the Register has closed).

In every case a pupil will have had a minimum of 10 school sessions (ie 5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence during the current term before a Penalty Notice is considered.

The Authority never takes such action lightly and would far rather work with parents/carers to improve attendance without having to resort to any enforcement actions. Attendance is of such importance to all of us however that the Authority will use the powers if this is the only way of securing a child's schooling.

- ***Is a Warning Given?***

You will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Notice being issued, which will tell you the extent of your child's absences and give you 15 school days in which to effect an improvement. In that time your child must have no unauthorised absences from school.

No warning is required to be given for issuing a Notice for leave of absence that has not been authorised by the headteacher.

There is no limit to the number of times formal warning of possible Penalty Notice issue may be made in any particular case.

- ***Is there an appeal process?***

There is no statutory right of appeal once a notice has been issued, but on receipt of a warning you can make representations should you wish.

- ***How do I pay?***

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Penalty Notice. You need to be aware that payment in part or by instalment is not an option with Penalty Notices.

- ***What happens if I do not pay?***

You have up to 42 days from receipt to pay the Penalty Notice in full, after which the Authority is required under the Act to commence proceedings in the Magistrates court for the original offence of poor attendance by your child.

If proven, this can attract a range of fines up to £2,500 and/or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences depending upon circumstances.

- ***Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty Notice but my child is still missing school?***

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice – payment discharges your liability in this respect. However it may be the case that a prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Notice, depending upon the circumstances. If this is an issue, it is vital that you work closely with your child's school and support agencies such as Education Welfare.

- ***Can I get help if my child is not attending regularly?***

Yes, the Local Authority and your child's school will give you advice and support if you need help to secure an improvement in your child's attendance.

It is very important that you speak with the school or with the Education Welfare Service at the earliest opportunity if you have any worries at all about securing your child's attendance.

**Useful contacts:**

**Education Welfare Service**

Town Hall  
St Ives Road  
Maidenhead  
Berkshire  
SL6 7YR

01628 683542

RBWM