

Broadway Partnership

School Policy for Attendance and Punctuality

2016

Caldmore Primary

Delves Junior

Delves Infant

Fullbrook Nursery

Hillary Primary

Palfrey Junior

Palfrey Infant

Whitehall Junior

Whitehall Infant

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction**
 - The Aims of this Policy

- 2.0 Our School Information**
 - Absence by Reason 2014/15
 - School Average 2009-10
 - Targets 2015/2016
 - Absence –Previous Performance

- 3.0 Drivers – Local and National**

- 4.0 Roles and Responsibilities**
 - Lead School Governor
 - Parent/carer Role
 - Head Teacher
 - Class Teachers
 - Attendance Clerk
 - Attendance Officer
 - Education Welfare Officer

- 5.0 Communication**
 - Home School Agreement
 - What Our Children have said about absence

- 6.0 Our School Attendance Management Process**
 - Daily
 - Weekly
 - Half Term
 - End of Term – Autumn & Spring
 - End of Year – July

- 7.0 Types of Absence**
 - Arriving at school late
 - Unauthorised Absence
 - Authorised Absence
 - Emergencies/ Leave of Absence
 - Religious Observance
 - Persistent Absence

- 8.0 Rewards and Sanctions**
 - Rewards
 - Sanctions
 - Penalty Notices and Walsall Code of Practice

- 9.0 Quality Assurance**

- 10.0 Appendices**

1.0 Introduction

The Broadway Partnership is committed to protect the rights of all children to education as stipulated in article 28 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child.

Our school Attendance and Punctuality Policy is designed to give clear information in respect of our Attendance Management processes to parent/carers, children, school staff, governors and the wider community.

This policy sets out our ambition for our children and recognises that there is a strong correlation between any absence and underachievement. It also recognises that good punctuality is essential for a child to start the school day prepared for learning.

We have developed the policy with our children, parent/carers staff and Governors and it is line with statutory guidance and expectations of Walsall Children's Services. The Policy provides information about rewards and sanctions.

We will focus on reducing persistent absence, unauthorised absence and we will challenge unsatisfactory reasons given for all absences.

Our school will be a welcoming learning environment and our teaching staff are dedicated to help the children achieve the best they can.

In order to achieve the best outcomes for children it is expected that all our children will attend school every day on time. We believe that excellent attendance is paramount to raising standards and is fundamental to whole school improvement.

We expect our Governors, staff, parent/carers and children to adhere to the framework of this policy.

1.1 The Aims of this Policy

- Improve Overall Attendance
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for pupils, parent/carers, staff and Governors
- To define agreed roles and responsibilities in carrying out specific tasks
- To provide support, advice and guidance to families
- To develop a systematic approach for reporting the school's absence information
- To develop a system of Reward & Sanction
- To promote multi-agency partnerships to address the needs of children with complexities related to irregular attendance
- To bring in line policies and procedures to reflect the diverse needs of the wider community

2.0 Our School Information

YEAR	Attendance	All Absence	Unauthorised Absence	Authorised Absence	Late Marks	PA at 15%
2013/14	96%	4%	0.8%	3.2%	387	7 pupils
2014/15 (1)	96.1%	3.9%	0.6%	3.3%	321	6 pupils
2014/15 (2)	95.9%	4.1%	0.7%	3.4%	375	9 pupils

- Data for 2013/14 is published data taken over 5 terms
- Data for 2014/15 (1) is locally collected data (not published until March 2016) over 5 terms for comparison and over 6 terms (2) for information.

2.1 Absence by Reason – 2014-15 (locally collected data)

Illness	Holiday	Unauthorised Holiday	Other Unauthorised	Religious Observance	Other Authorised	Persistent Absentees
2.8%	0%	0.3%	0.4%	0.1%	3.3%	9 pupils

2.2 Absence by Reason 2013/14

Illness	Holiday	Unauthorised Holiday	Other Unauthorised	Religious Observance	Other Authorised	Persistence Absence
2.74%	0%	0.3%	0.35%	0.15%	3.25%	7 pupils

2.3 Targets for 2014/15

Our school absence targets are based on the expectations as set out by the Governing Body and are in line with national expectations and the Ofsted framework.

Overall Absence Target	96.5%
Reduce Holiday Absence	0%
Persistent Absence at 10%	<i>Not set nationally</i>

- PA threshold reduced from 15% to 10% September 2015

2.4 Absence -Previous Performance

The table below demonstrates the absence trend for our school and makes the comparisons to the national average for both overall absence and persistent absence (PA)

Year	Overall Absence School	Overall Absence National Average	Persistent Absence School (At 15%)	Persistent Absence National Average (At 15%)
2011-12	4.4%	4.4%	1.91%	3.1%
2012-13	4%	4.4%	1.92%	3%
2013-14	4%	3.8%	1.64%	2.1%

- Figures are from published data which reflects terms 1-5 *locally collected data for 13/14 indicates OA at 3.8%*

3.0 Drivers – Local and National

Raising standards for children and young people are driven by legislation, national policy and the local agenda. Education establishments are subject to expectation, regulation and inspection to ensure standards continue to rise. Schools are constantly challenged to maintain standards and improve attainment. Our school will follow the principles and expectations as set out in the following documents.

- OFSTED Framework for inspecting absence 2011 & 2012
- Keeping Pupil Registers June 2008
- Reducing Holiday Absence October 2009 (Walsall Children's Services)
- Persistent Absence DfE letter July 2011
- Endorsement by C&YP Scrutiny Panel of their investigations into school absence
- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 2004
- Walsall Children and Young Person's Priorities

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Lead School Governor

The Lead Governor for School Attendance will ask for a report each term outlining the following

- PA Report outlining the number of children on trajectory to become PA
- OA report with comparisons to the same period in the previous year
- UA report with comparisons to the same period in the previous year
- Number of Children who are chronically ill and level of support offered for these children

There is a Governor for Attendance. The Lead Governor for Attendance will be satisfied there is contact between the school and home in respect of all absences and that the elements and aims of the policy are being followed.

4.2 Parent/Carer Role

Parent/carers must contact the school on the first day of any absence to explain the reason for the absence. Parent/carers should understand that, in law, it is the school which decides whether the absence is going to be authorised or not. Schools will base this judgement on the reason provided for the absence, evidence provided and/or the level of absence.

/carers are encouraged to ensure their child attends school regularly and any emerging issues which may affect attendance should be advised to the school at the earliest opportunity.

Parent/carers must NOT expect **any** leave of absence to be granted automatically. This includes any requests for leave of absence in respect of a pilgrimage. Whilst all requests will be considered individually, parent/carers must respect that the head teacher's decision in collaboration with the Broadway Partnership is final and is made in line with Legislative constraints, National Government and Local Authority expectations.

Parent/carers must write a note to the school offering a reason for any absence

Parent/carers must make sure their child/ren arrive at school on time.

4.3 Head Teacher

The Head teacher must ensure the absence management process is in line with legislation and regulation. S/he must also ensure registers are maintained accurately in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) England Regulations 2006.

The Head Teacher will continue to raise education standards for children by encouraging regular school attendance.

4.4 Class Teachers

Class teachers will ensure their registers are maintained in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) England regulations 2006. Class Teachers will ensure any information appertaining to a child's punctuality or attendance is communicated to the Attendance Clerk at the earliest opportunity. This will avoid unnecessary telephone contact with families or cause them undue concern.

Class Teachers will report any emerging patterns of absence to the Attendance Clerk.

4.5 Attendance Clerk

The Attendance Clerk will ensure registers are updated with the appropriate attendance and absence codes. S/he will also provide absence reports from the Education Management System (SIMS or Facility) at the request of the Head Teacher or Lead Governor. The Attendance Clerk will liaise with Class Teachers and the Head Teacher or Attendance Lead to report any emerging patterns of absence or when a child is absent without a good reason.

4.6 Attendance Officer

The named Attendance Officer for the school works within a commissioned time framework and will support the school to manage their attendance. The Officer will normally visit once each week for a referral meeting with School Attendance Clerk or Attendance Lead. The Officers will carry out unannounced home visits to families who have recent absence. The Attendance Officers and the school will identify children who are PA or at risk of becoming PA each term and will actively target those children for early intervention.

4.7 Education Welfare Officer

An Education Welfare Officer will be designated to address attendance issues for pupils whose attendance may lead to statutory action. Referrals for this should be sent to the EWS office for allocation following initial intervention by the Attendance Officer and/or school. The designated EWO will be responsible for managing the process for all prosecutions.

5.0 Communication

We will communicate any changes or updated information to families and the community in the following ways. We welcome feedback from our families and Governors.

- News letter
- Website
- Annual reports
- Meetings
- Letters
- Telephone (to address individual matters when needed).

5.1 Home School Agreement

Our school will invite parent/carers to sign a Home School Agreement whereby they are informed of expectations for excellent attendance.

5.2 What our Children have said about absence

Our Children have told us they feel out of touch after they have been on holiday and they struggle to keep up with the work because they have missed so much.

Our teachers tell us they have noticed a big difference in a child's progress after they have been absent and even the more able children have not been able to keep up with the work as they have missed vital lessons to help them progress.

6.0 Our School Attendance Management Process

6.1 Daily

- All class registers will be marked accurately
- Reasons for absence will be screened to establish whether absence is authorised or not
- All daily absence will be scrutinised for reason and notification
- Parent/carers will be contacted when the reason for absence is not satisfactory or unknown
- Parent/carers will be advised if the absence is to be recorded as unauthorised
- Pupils arriving late will be recorded as such in the register

6.2 Weekly

- All absences will be scrutinised for identification of repeat periods of absence or emerging patterns of absence
- Pupils having two or more periods of absence in any 6 weeks period to be referred to the School Lead Teacher for Attendance
- Referrals to Education Welfare Service identified
- Requests for leave of absence referred to head teacher and Governors and parent/carers informed of outcome by letter.

6.3 Half Term

- Letters sent to children on trajectory to becoming Persistent Absentees (Letter 2)
- Identification of children who need multi-agency involvement to support concerns or complexities which include absence or punctuality concerns
- Implementation of multi-agency involvement to support concerns or complexities of individual cases where there are absence or punctuality concerns

6.4 End of Term - Autumn & Spring

- Report to head teacher and Lead Governor showing
 - No. of pupils on trajectory to becoming PA
 - Overall absence compared to same period 2009-10
 - Unauthorised absence compared to the same period 2009-10
 - No. of referrals to EWS
- Identification of pupils 'at risk' of PA and referral to the Attendance Officer

- With Attendance Officer, scrutinise pupils' attendance to identify those to progress to EWO
- Ensure pupils with chronic medical conditions are properly supported
- Refresh Attendance Action Plans with the Attendance Officers to identify pupils 'at risk' of becoming PA

6.5 End of Year – July

- End of year report to Head Teacher and Governors
 - 3 year trend for OA and PA
 - Comparisons for National and Local OA & PA (Autumn figures only)
 - Progress to targets
 - EWS involvement
 - Précis of intervention from other agencies
 - Impact of intervention
 - Holiday absence level and comparisons
 - Rewards and sanctions detailed

7.0 Types of Absence

7.1 Arriving at school late

- The times of our school day are as follows
- Morning Session : 0855 to 1205
- Afternoon Session: 1305 to 1525
- Morning Registration closes at 0910
- Afternoon Registration closes at 1310
- If a child arrives at school after registration has opened at 0855 or 1305 but before the register has closed, then he or she will be recorded as **LATE** using the L code. If they arrive after registration has closed then they will be recorded as **unauthorised absent** using the U registration code.

7.2 Unauthorised Absence (UA)

All absence will have an appropriate code in accordance with DfE Guidance Absence and Attendance Codes. If there has been no reason provided for the absence or an unsatisfactory reason has been provided then the school can only record absence as UNAUTHORISED. It is the decision of the school and NOT the parent/carers which determines whether absence is authorised or not.

Examples of Unauthorised Absence could be:

- Family Birthday
- Holidays
- Shopping
- Hair cuts
- Buying shoes or uniform
- Emerging patterns of any absence until satisfactory reason has been sought
- Illness of another family member
- Illness & bereavement of grandparent and extended family members
- Trips to airports

7.3 Authorised Absence (AA)

Absence can be recorded as authorised when a school has been satisfied there is a satisfactory reason for the absence. It is only recorded as authorised if it is something affecting the child's ability to attend school.

7.4 Emergencies/ Leave of Absence

Parent/carers need to apply for leave of absence **in writing to the Head Teacher in advance**, outlining the following:

- First date and last date of leave of absence
- Name, address and date of birth of the Child
- Full names and date of birth of parent/carers
- Names of siblings at other Walsall Schools
- Reasons for such a request
- Request to see both outward bound & incoming flight details (if appropriate)

7.5

In Law, it is the Head Teacher's decision whether to authorise absence or not and this has been upheld by the high court. Only in very exceptional circumstances will the Head Teacher agree to a request for leave of absence in term time; the right for parent/carers to request up to 10 days absence for the purpose of a holiday was removed by the Government in September 2013. To ensure fairness to families and to maintain a consistent approach across local schools there may be some occasions when the Head Teacher consults with members of the Broadway Partnership Panel to determine whether the circumstances of the request are recognised as exceptional.

Exceptional circumstances refers to extenuating and emergency situations related to core family members. Core family members are Mother, Father, siblings of the child in school.

7.6

There is no automatic right for any term time absence. The Child's education will be paramount and absence will only be granted in very exceptional circumstances. The school and governing body are committed to raising standards and therefore the educational needs of the child will be critical in the decision making process. Parent/carers should not expect term time absence to be granted.

7.7

The law states that schools can delete a pupil's name from the register when the pupil has been continually absent for not less than 20 days, such absence was not authorised, and the proprietor (school) does not have grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend due to sickness or any unavoidable cause, and the proprietor and the LA have failed after reasonable enquiry to ascertain where the pupil is. A pupil can also be removed from the school roll if he/she does not return from a leave of absence within 10 days of the agreed return date without evidence that the continuing absence is justified.

7.8

The school follows the principles as set out in Walsall Children's Services – Guidance for 'Tackling Holiday Absence'.

7.9

Walsall Council Children and Young Persons Scrutiny Panel have endorsed the Tackling Holiday Absence guidance document.

7.10

Religious Observance – The Department for Education (DfE) set out the definition for absence for Religious Observance. This being, “Absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals. Parent/carers should be encouraged to give advanced notice.”

The DfE explains that if the religious body has not set the day apart there is no requirement for the school to approve the absence or grant a leave of absence.

Any additional days linked to a day set aside for religious observance will not be authorised by the school.

This means that the school will only be able to authorise absence for the **one day** set aside for any religious observance.

8.0 Persistent Absence (PA)

Any absence either authorised or not will impact on Persistent Absence. The school will identify pupils who are ‘at risk’ of becoming PA each term and will report to the Head Teacher at the end of each term the names of our children who are at risk. The school will then track these children through the year using the workflow book to ensure the risk of them becoming PA at the end of half term 5 is reduced. PA is measured throughout the year and the threshold for measuring PA is the number of children who are absent for 10% of the year or more.

8.1

The school will report all cases of PA pupils to the Head Teacher and Governors. PA pupils or those at risk of becoming PA will be referred to the Attendance Officer (Local Authority) each term.

8.2

Each half term each child with PA at 10% absence will be tracked, measured and reported as follows:

Half Term 1	Half Term 1+2	Half Term 1+2+3	Half Terms 1+2+3+4	Half Terms 1+2+3+4+5	Half Terms 1+2+3+4+5+6
Pupils with 7 + sessions of absence	14+ sessions of absence	20+ sessions of absence	25+ sessions of absence	32+ sessions of absence	38+ sessions of absence

9.0 Rewards and Sanctions

9.1 Rewards

Our school has in place the following to reward excellent attendance

- Certificates for excellent attendance
- Weekly whole class award

9.2 Sanctions

The following sanctions will be applied in respect of irregular attendance

- Parent/carer Contract
- Referral to the Local Authority Attendance Officer
- Referral to the Education Welfare Service for Legal Intervention
- Warning letters

- Prosecution for Irregular Attendance – Section 444, (1) Education Act 1996
On conviction of a section 444 (1) offence each parent/carer of each child may be fined up to £2,500.

- Prosecution for Irregular Attendance – Section 444, (1) (A) Education Act 1996

To secure a conviction for this offence, the prosecutor needs to show that the parent/carer had knowledge of the child's absence.

On conviction, each parent/carer can be fined up to £2,500 and or imprisoned for up to 6 months. If they fail to attend court a warrant for their arrest may be issued. A pre sentence report is required. The sentence can be suspended for up to 2 years.

Conditional Discharge

This is a means of disposal by way of a fixed term period up to 3 years. If the defendant is convicted within the period they could be re-sentenced for the offence.

10. Penalty Notices and Walsall Code of Practice

Subsection (1) of section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 adds two new sections (444A and 444B), after section 444 of the Education Act 1996. These new sections introduce Penalty Notices as an alternative to prosecution under section 444 and enable a parent/carer to discharge potential liability for conviction and for that offence by paying a penalty.

Section 3 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 gives powers to Local Authorities, head teachers or other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is capable but unwilling to secure school attendance. These powers came into force on 27th February 2004.

Under existing legislation, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, a parent/carer commits an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and the absence is not authorised by the school.

The Penalty is £60.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period then the Local Authority must prosecute or withdraw the notice. Prosecution will be in respect of statutory action under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

All Parent and Carers will be liable for a Penalty Notice. This means where a parent/carer has made the decision to take children out of school for the purpose of a holiday the absence will not be authorised by the school and will be liable.

11. Quality Assurance

We will maintain a high standard for recording and reporting absence. We will support children and families to achieve positive outcomes by engaging with school staff and other supporting services and agencies. We will report to Governors about the following:

- Number of pupils on trajectory to becoming PA
- Overall Absence
- Unauthorised Absence
- Progress to Absence Target
- Our attendance monitoring process through the School SEF
- Align our processes to the Ofsted Framework for managing school attendance
- Number of vulnerable children accessing other service or agency involvement

12. Appendices

OFSTED Framework for inspecting absence September 2011 & January 2012 Appendix 1
Keeping Pupil Registers June 2008 Appendix 2
Attendance and absence codes Appendix 3

Review date: January 2017