



ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR ALL WIRRAL SCHOOLS

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Version 4

Document Control

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Document History

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|---------|----------|--|--------------------|
| 1 | Feb 2021 | Added reference to part-time timetables (2.8) Added Part-time Timetable notification template (Appendix 12) Added Deletion from Roll notification template (Appendix 13) | Caroline Henderson |
| 2 | Nov 2021 | Updated information added about the Vulnerable Children's Panel (Pages 46 + 47) and new referral form (Page 48 + 49) Reference made to Vulnerable Children's Panel on page 6: Responsibilities of Parents / Carers, and on page 7: Responsibilities of schools. | Caroline Henderson |
| 3 | Nov 2021 | Amended Appendix 8, Appendix 9 and Appendix 10 to include mention of referral to Vulnerable Children's Panel in addition to or instead of enforcement action | Damian Stormont |
| 4 | Nov 2022 | Page 3 - added in Severe Absenteeism Page 5 – added in about point of contact Page 6 – added in use of Family Toolbox and Zillo Page 7 - added in about Senior Leader Page 7 – added in plans for persistently and severely absent Page 7 – added in about advice from Early Help Worker Page 9 – changed Working Together 2018 to 2020 Page 9 – added in pupils under 50% Page 10 – changed information about Home Education Service Page 10 – added further information re part-time timetables Page 12 – added in for LA to meet at least termly with attendance staff within school Page12 – added in 2.13 Severe Absenteeism Page14 – added in about Deletion from Rol forms Page 16 – changed title of Appendix 15 Page 29 – added in mention of health contact, Family Toolbox and Zillo Page 30 – added in mention of health contact, Family Toolbox and Zillo Page 31 – added in mention of health contact, Family Toolbox and Zillo Page 36 – removed the word exclusion Page 39 – added in SEN status Page 40 – added in categories Page 45 – updated links to most recent documents Page 46 – Appendix 15 Vulnerable Children's Panel | Damian Stormont |

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1. Introduction

We believe that regular school attendance is central to raising standards in education and to improving the life chances of all children. Regular attendance at school enables children to gain maximum benefit from the range of educational and wider opportunities available to them. This Policy sets out the framework for how the council, parents, carers, local schools (including academies, free schools, independent schools and alternative provision establishments), governors, and partner services can work together to help all children within Wirral to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance.

Schools and Local Authorities are expected to work together to:

- *Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.*
- *Ensure every pupil has access to the appropriate full-time education to which they are entitled.*
- *Act early to address patterns of absence.*

1.1 Regular School Attendance

The need for **regular school attendance** is given a high priority by all Wirral schools.

The Supreme Court ruled in April 2017 (Platt v Isle of Wight) that **regular** attendance is '**in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school**'. In Wirral Schools, this is interpreted as **every day that the school requires a child to attend, unless the absence has been approved by the Headteacher.**

Unsurprisingly, children who are absent from school or who are persistently late, can soon fall behind with their learning. Research conducted by the Department for Education (DfE 2016) confirmed that, as the level of overall pupil absence increases, the likelihood of pupils achieving what they are capable of decreases.

Parents of children of compulsory school age are, by law, required to ensure that their children receive a suitable education through regular attendance at school or otherwise.

1.2 Definition of 'Parent'

For the purposes of this policy and other education related issues, a **parent** is as defined under section 576 of the Education Act 1996:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of their relationship with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law.

1.3 Attendance in Early Years

Children must start full-time education once they reach compulsory school age. This is on 31 December, 31 March, or 31 August following their fifth birthday - whichever comes first. If a child's fifth birthday is on one of those dates, then they reach compulsory school age on that date.

Absence data in respect of four and five year olds who are not of compulsory school age is collected and reported upon separately at national level. Data relates only to an overall absence percentage, as children not of compulsory school age cannot technically accrue unauthorised absence. However, it is established good practice for schools to use nationally prescribed registration codes for all sessions that a non-compulsory school aged child is required to attend, as to do so will help staff to monitor attendance and to be alert to any emerging patterns of absence that may be an indicator of wider concern. There should be high expectations in place for this cohort of children in terms of attendance, so that good habits are established from the outset of a child's school career.

2. Expectations to ensure delivery of this Policy across all Wirral Schools

2.1 Responsibilities & Expectations of Parents and Carers:

- ✓ To ensure that their child attends school every day that the school is open, unless there is a genuine and unavoidable reason that prevents them from so doing;
- ✓ To ensure that their child arrives at school on time (*between 8:45am and 8:55am each day*). A reason should be offered for any lateness;
- ✓ To inform school as soon as possible, by 'phone or in person, if their child is unable to attend on any day, together with the reason for absence (*0151 648 3412 (option 1)*);
- ✓ To trust that school staff will contact them during the school day if a child is ill in school and needs to go home;
- ✓ To ensure that school has at least two sets of full contact details, and that these are kept updated;
- ✓ To make all medical appointments outside school hours whenever possible, and to inform school in advance of any medical appointments that cannot be scheduled out of school time. For absence to be authorised as a medical absence, schools do require evidence, such as an appointment card or letter;
- ✓ In the case of a primary school child, to ensure that their child is collected on time at the end of the school day;
- ✓ To take family holidays during school holiday periods, and to be aware that there is no entitlement to withdraw children for authorised leave of absence during term time. Any requests for leave of absence during term time should be made in writing and in advance to the head teacher (*form available from school office*);
- ✓ To be aware of curriculum requirements and to be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during particularly important times such as SATs, GCSEs, and other exam periods;
- ✓ To provide evidence and advice from a health professional when needed to enable school to gain a greater understanding of their child's health issues;
- ✓ To talk to school staff as soon as possible should their child be reluctant to come to school for any reason, or if there are any other issues impacting on school attendance. This is so that any barriers to attendance can be quickly identified and overcome. In most cases the first point of contact should be the child's class teacher, form tutor or the Attendance Officer within the school

Absence Procedures:

- ✓ It is important that parents / carers keep in touch with school about all absences. This information is used to help determine whether children's absence is recorded in the register as authorised or unauthorised. The head teacher has the ultimate authority to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised. If parents do not communicate with school, and staff are unable to establish contact, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

2.2 Medical Evidence:

The most common reason for children being persistently absent from school is illness. When pupils are having repeat absences due to reported illness, schools may need more evidence and advice to help decide whether or not the absence should be authorised, and to see whether any additional support is required. Children can be reluctant to attend school from time to time, or there may be other issues affecting attendance. It is never advisable for parents to 'cover' for their absence or to give-in to pressure to excuse them from attending. Covering up gives the impression that attendance does not matter, and usually makes things worse. It is always better to get in touch with school, to share concerns, and to plan a way forward.

Schools can accept the following as medical evidence:

- ✓ GP certificate
- ✓ Letter from health professional
- ✓ Appointment card / letter (dated)
- ✓ Prescription / Medication in the name of the child
- ✓ Text message from GP or NHS confirming an appointment
- ✓ Care of the chemist – date stamped slip to show medical advice has been sought

See Appendix 3 for advice in relation to required absence periods for identified health issues.

In situations where a child's attendance record is of concern, usual practice would be for parents / carers to be invited into school to meet with an appropriate member of staff. This provides an opportunity for concerns from both home and school to be shared, and for an agreed plan of action to be put in place to address any identified difficulties.

Please remember that parents and carers are encouraged to contact school at an early point should they have any concerns that are impacting on their child's school attendance.

We acknowledge that children are at a higher risk of missing school if they have issues around their emotional wellbeing and mental health. This can then lead to further problems in terms of children falling behind with work, and of feelings of social isolation. It is particularly important in these circumstances that parents / carers work together with school to ensure that appropriate help and support is offered to respond to concerns as they arise. Early Help means taking action to support a child, young person, or/and their family as soon as a problem emerges. School may also seek advice about sources of help and support from the Authority's Vulnerable Children's Panel in cases where concerns about a child's unauthorised absence are ongoing. Parents may also wish to use Family Toolbox <https://familytoolbox.co.uk/> to identify possible sources of support or encourage their child to access Zillo <https://www.zillowirral.co.uk/>

2.3 Responsibilities of School:

- ✓ To demonstrate a strong and inclusive whole school attendance ethos that helps pupils feel that they 'belong'.
- ✓ To promote the importance of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers at every opportunity (via newsletters, assemblies, and any other communications between school and home).
- ✓ To establish effective procedures that enable staff to record, identify, and address concerns around overall pupil absence.
- ✓ To consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences using the correct DfE prescribed registration code (see Appendix 1). This duty also extends to ensuring that N coded absences are resolved in a timely manner. Parents should be made aware that if school cannot establish an acceptable reason for their child's absence, the missed sessions will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- ✓ To have sensitive support systems in place for vulnerable pupils which recognise the complexity of children's lives and family circumstances.
- ✓ To inform the local authority of any part-time or flexible education arrangements in place for individual pupils, together with plans for tracking and review (See Appendix 11).
- ✓ To identify a senior leader who has overall responsibility for attendance, and who is also responsible for the achievement and wellbeing of all children who are on the school roll, but not accessing education in the usual way, such as those pupils in alternative provision placements. The senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr Burrows who can be contacted via the school office.
- ✓ To encourage open communication channels and partnership working between home and school to improve attendance and punctuality. This will include meetings with parents and carers in school, where any support needs can be identified and addressed, together with the joint formulation of realistic plans for improving individual pupils' attendance.
- ✓ To develop procedures for the reintegration of long-term absentees. In addition school must have plans in place to support each persistently absent pupil and each severely absent pupil.
- ✓ To have support plans in place to ease pupils' transition between each phase of education when there is a change of school, with particular reference to the needs of more vulnerable children.
- ✓ To seek advice from the Authority's designated Locality Attendance Officer (LAO) both in respect of the management of whole school attendance matters, and of individual children whose attendance gives cause concern.
- ✓ To have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the school and other support agencies in relation to the provision of additional support for pupils whose attendance difficulties are symptomatic of wider family issues or / and indicative of safeguarding concerns where a multi-agency response is required seeking advice from the allocated Early Help worker as and when needed.
- ✓ To refer children into the Authority's Vulnerable Children's Panel for advice and support in situations where parents are reluctant to engage voluntarily with early help, and concerns about unauthorised absence are ongoing. Parents should be made aware that this will be the case.
- ✓ To engage in partnership working with the Authority's Attendance Service to ensure appropriate use of legal sanctions in order to reinforce parental responsibility for securing regular attendance.
- ✓ To analyse and evaluate a range of accurate attendance data to improve individual pupil and whole school performance, and to identify any vulnerable groups of pupils whose attendance is below what would be expected. There should be robust tracking procedures in place with respect to the attendance of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, children in receipt of

Pupil Premium, and children who are Looked After by the Authority or have an allocated Social Worker.

- ✓ To incentivise, reward and celebrate good and improved attendance on an individual, group, and whole school level – creating a positive culture in which good and improved attendance is highly valued. School can encourage ownership of their attendance reward schemes by seeking and acting on pupils' views in this respect.
- ✓ To provide governors with sufficient data and information about pupils who are not attending regularly or accessing education in the usual way, so that they can evaluate and challenge the effectiveness of school's arrangements.
- ✓ To refer children who are, or who are at risk of becoming, Children Missing from Education (CME) to the Local Authority in accordance with Wirral Policy.
- ✓ To notify the Local Authority of any child whose name is deleted from roll at parental request in order to pursue elective home education.

2.4 Expectations of School Staff:

First Day Contact

Parents should be encouraged to contact school on each morning that their child is absent. If a child is absent, and no contact from parent has been received by school:

- ✓ School will endeavour to telephone parents/carers to ascertain a reason for absence in accordance with 'first day contact' procedures.
- ✓ School may also telephone any other persons on the pupil's contact list if they are unable to make contact with the parent.
- ✓ Home welfare visits may also be undertaken in connection with concerns around a child's absence (particularly when parents do not respond to requests for contact from school staff).
- ✓ Priority tracking should take place where safeguarding is a known issue. School's Designated Safeguarding Lead / Children Looked After Lead should be alerted should there be any concerns in respect of the absence of children subject of Child In Need arrangements or Child Protection Plans, or children Looked After by the Local Authority.

The Attendance Officer(s) are responsible for:

- ✓ Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- ✓ Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- ✓ Making first day response calls to parents of absent children where no contact has been received.
- ✓ Informing the Attendance Lead / Designated Safeguarding Lead of any cases where the explanation for absence gives potential cause for concern, and where additional support or intervention may be required.
- ✓ Recording details of children who arrive late.
- ✓ Sending out letters and emails to parents regarding attendance concerns.
- ✓ Administration work around school Attendance Panels (which can also involve the Authority's Locality Attendance Officer).
- ✓ Reporting daily and weekly attendance figures.
- ✓ Keeping an overview of whole school, class, and individual attendance rates, looking particularly at overall absence, levels of unauthorised absence, and patterns of absence.

Link with Safeguarding / Education Neglect

- ✓ Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.
- ✓ Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- ✓ Schools have a key role in ensuring children and young people are kept safe. School staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, and prevent concerns from escalating.
- ✓ Every school has a designated safeguarding lead who will provide support to staff members to carry out their safeguarding duties and can liaise closely with other services such as children's social care and early help services.
- ✓ Schools should be alert to unauthorised absence as being a potential indicator of educational or wider neglect. Neglect is the most common reason for a child to be the subject of a Child Protection Plan in the UK.
- ✓ **Working Together 2020** identifies neglect as:
'The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.'

2.5 Stepped Interventions – *This Section Should be tailored to the school*

The following are examples of interventions which may be considered by schools to support the promotion of regular attendance:

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| 97% - 95% | Early Warning | Early awareness raising, 'phone call home, monitored by class / form teachers |
| 95% - 92% | School Monitoring | Letters of concern, 1:1 meetings, home visits, concern escalated to senior staff |
| 92% - 90% | School Intervention (stage 1) | Attendance Report Card School letter to raise awareness of Fixed Penalty process in cases of unauthorised absence, meetings with parents/carers, continued school support |
| 90% and below | Attendance Service and School Intervention (stage 2) | Attendance Panel, Parenting Contract, Attendance Report Card, Home Visits, Meeting with Locality Attendance Officer, Education Penalty Warning from LA / Penalty Notice (which could lead to prosecution) |
| Unauthorised attendance that falls below 75% can be an underlying risk factor and indicative of a safeguarding concern. All of the above should be underpinned by the offer of ongoing support to address identified difficulties. All pupils under 50% are classed as severely absent and must have a plan to support their attendance. | | |

2.6 Lateness

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement. When children arrive late and miss the start of the school day, they can miss work and vital information for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, and this can be embarrassing and upsetting for the child. Lateness can also encourage absence, as some pupils would rather not attend school at all, than arrive late.

- ✓ Registers are marked by **9:00 am**. If children arrive in class after this time, they will receive a late mark in the register (code L).
- ✓ In line with recommendations from the Department for Education (DfE), registers will close at **9:10am**. If children arrive after this time, they will be recorded as having arrived after closure of registers (code U). This counts as an unauthorised absence for that session.
- ✓ Any pupil arriving late should enter the school through the main entrance and be signed-in in accordance with school's procedures.
- ✓ If a primary school child arrives late and is unaccompanied by a parent/carer, school will make contact to establish the reason for lateness.
- ✓ If lateness becomes a regular occurrence, it will be treated in the same way as unauthorised absence, with parents/carers being contacted and invited into school to discuss the situation.

2.7 Children with Medical Needs

- ✓ School's Governing Body must ensure that arrangements are in place to support pupils with medical conditions in school. Individual healthcare plans should be in place, and these should provide clarity about what needs to be done, when, and by whom in order to ensure that children with medical needs may access and enjoy the same opportunities at school as any other child (see DfE statutory guidance issued in April 2014: 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions').
- ✓ The primary aim of educating children and young people who have medical needs is to minimise, as far as possible, the disruption to their normal schooling by allowing them to continue their education and to progress as much as their medical needs allow. 'Medical needs' encompass both physical health and mental / emotional health issues.

In circumstances where a child has complex health needs and is medically unfit to attend school, referral may be made to The Home & Continuing Education Service which is a local authority service currently based at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre. Medical referrals to the Home & Continuing Education Service must come jointly from both school and an appropriate health professional.

2.8 Children on Part-Time Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. There may, however, be exceptional circumstances where a part-time timetable is needed as a time-limited intervention to respond to a child's individual needs. This must always be in agreement with the child's parent(s)/carer(s). Schools are required to submit information about such arrangements to Wirral Attendance Service using the template included as Appendix 12. Examples of when a part-time timetable may be considered are:

Medical issue
Emotional/Mental Health
Family/Friendship issue
Re-integration programme following absence
SEND – identified/awaiting specialist placement
SEND – unidentified/undiagnosed needs

2.9 Celebrating Good Attendance

It is important that schools recognise and celebrate good and improved attendance. This can be done in a variety of ways, and some ideas are listed below:

- Fitness Friday;
- Attendance Report Card;
- Attendance display in every class room;
- Each class has a Pupil Attendance Officer who keeps the display up to date weekly;
- Attendance has a high profile in whole school assemblies each week;
- Weekly and half-termly certificates to recognise pupils who have reached their target attendance;
- Praise postcard sent home to recognise and celebrate improved attendance;
- Attendance League
- Prizes/Raffle
- Half term trophies
- Vouchers for families
- Aspirations week
- Funtrition
- Extra Golden time
- Children choose half termly rewards

Locality Attendance Officers from the Authority's Attendance Service are happy to send positive letters to parents to recognise and reinforce progress made in terms of securing their child's attendance. School can also invite Locality Attendance Officers to be involved in celebration assemblies.

2.10 Expectations of Pupils

Pupils are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school and to obtain maximum benefit from the range of educational and other opportunities available to them.

Pupils are expected:

- To do all they can to attend school regularly and on time;
- To talk with a trusted adult about any issues that are making it difficult for them to come to school, or that are affecting their wellbeing in school.
- To be aware of their attendance targets, and to work towards achieving them.

2.11 Expectations of the Local Authority and Wirral Attendance Service

The Local Authority is expected:

- To promote regular school attendance of children in schools across the Authority, and to work towards breaking the cycle of poor attendance, reduced attainment, and social disadvantage.
- To meet, at least termly, with attendance staff within school.
- To help schools in their work to reduce overall, persistent and severe pupil absence. This involves working with school staff, parents / carers, children, and various partner agencies to develop and implement practices which can help raise and sustain individual pupils' attendance levels.
- To carry out statutory duties in relation to the enforcement of school attendance.
- To carry out statutory duties in respect of the identification and tracking of children known to be, or at risk of becoming, missing from education (CME).

2.12 Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

Pupils are classified as 'persistently absent' if they miss 10% or more of school due to authorised or/and unauthorised absence. This equates to missing at least 19 days of their schooling across the full school year. Absence at this level is of significant concern. Schools will have monitoring systems in place to identify children who are at risk of falling into this category, and will involve parents / carers in formulating specific plans to prevent deterioration and to build-back attendance levels.

2.13 Severe Absenteeism

Pupils are classed as 'severely absent' if they miss 50% or more of school due to authorised or/and unauthorised absence. Schools will have monitoring systems in place to identify children who are at risk of falling into this category and will formulate plans in conjunction with parents and any other relevant professionals to build-back attendance levels.

3. Holidays in Term Time

Changes in Government Regulations mean that, as of 1st September 2013, there is no entitlement for parents to withdraw their children for authorised leave of absence in term time. Head teachers can only grant leave of absence during term-time if there are '**exceptional circumstances**' surrounding the request, **and** parents have made **an application in advance**. If a Headteacher is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances to warrant the granting of leave of absence, the Headteacher will then determine the number of school days a child can be away from school.

The principles for defining exceptional are: 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short', with 'unavoidable' meaning an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

Taking leave of absence in term time does affect child's educational progress, and parents are strongly discouraged from withdrawing their child from school during term time.

All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance to school. Request forms are available at the school office.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of the agreed number of days, will be classed as unauthorised absence, and may result in the issue of Education Penalty Notices by the Local Authority (see Appendix 2).

4. The Legal Framework

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable, full-time education. This can be by regular attendance at school, at alternative provision, or by elective home education.

The Local Authority has a range of legal powers to promote and enforce regular school attendance:

- Penalty Notices (Section 444A Education Act 1996)
- Prosecution of Parents / Carers in Magistrates' Court (Section 444 (1) / Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996)
- Application to the Family Court for an Education Supervision Order in respect of the child (Children Act 1989)
- School Attendance Order (Section 437 Education Act 1996)
- Parenting Order (Section 8 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

Each case is considered on an individual basis, but the circumstances in which a Penalty Notice for non-attendance may be issued by the Local Authority include:

- Unauthorised absence from school
- Unauthorised leave of absence during term time
- Unwarranted delayed return from authorised leave of absence, e.g., in excess of the agreed number of days
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed.

Head teachers can submit written requests to the Authority's Attendance Service asking for a formal Warning Letter to be issued to parents in respect of their child's unauthorised absence, and for an Education Penalty Notice to be subsequently served should there be no immediate improvement in the situation.

A minimum evidential requirement of ten (10) school sessions lost to unauthorised absence by any pupil in any one term, or across two half terms, is required to trigger the Penalty Notice process. A session is a half-day.

Where the Local Authority is of the opinion that a pupil's level of attendance is so low that initiating prosecution proceedings in the Magistrates' Court would be more appropriate, the Authority reserves the right not to issue a penalty notice.

4.1 Education Penalty Notices

The Authority issues Education Penalty Notices by post. Payment of an Education Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after this time, but within 28 days. Education Penalty Notices are issued separately to each parent in respect of each child. A possible exception to this would be where parents are separated, and one parent has taken a child on unauthorised leave of absence without the knowledge / consent of the other parent.

The Local Authority retains any revenue from the Education Penalty Notices to cover enforcement costs.

Non-payment of an Education Penalty Notice will result in the withdrawal of the Notice, and would normally trigger prosecution proceedings at Magistrates Court under Section 444 Education Act 1996. There is no right of appeal by parents/carers against an Education Penalty Notice.

5. Deletion from Roll

Schools can only lawfully remove a child from their school roll under certain circumstances in accordance with Government Regulations (see Appendix 13). Schools are required to inform the Local Authority of the details of all children who are removed from roll at non-standard transition times. This is to be done by completing a deletion from roll form and submitting it via email or Anycomms to schoolattendance@wirral.gov.uk.

6. Elective Home Education

One of the grounds under which a child can lawfully be removed from a school roll is if a parent notifies the Headteacher in writing that they are withdrawing their child from school in order to take full responsibility for provision of the child's education. School must notify the Local Authority, as the Authority will then have responsibility for assessing the suitability of education that is being provided for the child. The Authority must first consent to elective home education when a child has special educational needs and is placed in specialist provision.

Schools and the Authority respect that it is a parental right to pursue elective home education. It is, however, important that when parents opt to home educate, this is a positive choice and in the best interests of the child, rather than the option of last resort. Parents should be aware that elective home education is not a route to obtaining a place in a school of their choice which may have previously been declined, or a way of accessing alternative provision.

7. Children Looked After (CLA)

The attendance of children in the care of the Local Authority is also monitored by the Headteacher and Governors of the Virtual School. Use of the B and C codes should be agreed with the Headteacher of the Virtual School. The use of the N registration code for looked after children should be rare, as reasons for any absence should be obtained as a matter of priority. It is essential that contact is made with a child's social worker and the Authority's LACES team as soon as attendance concerns emerge. Attendance staff should routinely inform school's designated teacher for looked after children of their looked after children's attendance rates.

8. Pupils Attending Off-Site Educational Provision

Any pupil who is attending off-site educational provision should be marked using registration code D or B by their main school (according to the circumstances of the individual placement).

Code B should be used when pupils are present at off-site educational provision that has been approved by school. School is ultimately responsible for the safeguarding of pupils educated off-site, and use of the B code signifies that the education is supervised and measures are in place to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of the pupil.


School must ensure that the B codes reflect the daily attendance of the pupil at the off-site provision. For example, if a pupil misses a day due to illness, then the main school attendance register will show this day as an I and not a B.

It is important for agreement and clarity to be reached between school and the off-site provision with respect to arrangements for daily tracking and follow-up of any absence. There should be daily communication between school and the off-site provision in respect of individual pupils' absence.

The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. The D code is used to signify that the pupil was not expected to attend the session because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. Again, an agreement must be in place with respect to who has responsibility for the daily tracking of attendance and absence.

9. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by School and the Local Authority and updated in accordance with any new legislation or guidance, or changes to any other relevant procedures or documents. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the Authority's policies on Enforcement Procedures, Children Missing from Education, and Elective Home Education.

Signed:  **Head Teacher**

Date: January 2023

Date to be reviewed: January 2024

10. Appendices

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| Appendix 14 | School Attendance: Statutory Guidance |
| Appendix 15 | Vulnerable Children's Panel |

Appendix 1

Pupil Registration

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day, and once during the second session. On each occasion, it must be recorded whether each pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Absent

School must then follow-up on all pupil absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for absence
- Make sure that any safeguarding action is taken if needed
- Identify the correct registration code to insert in the electronic register

Nationally prescribed registration codes should be used consistently by all schools. These codes are used to give depth of meaning to the register and to provide statistical meaning to absences. Codes are all collected by DfE via download to the School Census System.

| Code | School Meaning | Statistical Meaning | Note |
|-------------|--|---|---|
| / | Present (AM) | Present | Pupil must be present on school site during registration |
| \ | Present (PM) | Present | |
| B | Off-site educational activity | Present: Approved Educational Activity | Used for a supervised educational activity that has been agreed by the school. School is ultimately responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site (not to be used where a pupil is at home completing schoolwork). |
| C | Leave of absence authorised by the school | Authorised absence | Exceptional individual circumstances |
| D | Dual Registered – at another educational establishment | Neither absent nor present for statistical purposes | Pupil scheduled to attend at the other school at which they are registered |
| E | Excluded but no alternative provision made | Authorised absence | Alternative provision must be in place from the sixth day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion |
| G | Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher | Unauthorised Absence | Retrospective approval cannot be given |
| H | Holiday authorised by the school | Authorised absence | Exceptional individual circumstances. Application made in advance. |
| I | Illness (not medical or dental appointments) | Authorised absence | Parents/carers should notify school on the first day of absence. School can ask parents to provide medical evidence (e.g. prescription, appointment card) if the authenticity of illness is in doubt. |
| J | At an interview at another educational establishment or employer | Present | Interview (to transfer to another educational establishment, for example) |

| Code | School Meaning | Statistical Meaning | Note |
|----------|---|-------------------------|--|
| L | Late arrival before closure of register | Present | |
| M | Medical or dental appointments | Authorised absence | |
| N | Reason for absence not yet provided | Unauthorised absence | Amend once the reason is known. If no reason is provided after two weeks, N should be replaced with code O |
| O | Absent from school without authorisation | Unauthorised absence | Unacceptable, or no, reason provided to account for absence |
| P | Participating in a supervised sporting activity | Present | Approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school |
| R | Religious observance | Authorised absence | The day must be exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. May need to seek confirmation from the religious body |
| S | Study Leave | Authorised absence | Should be used only sparingly for Year 11 pupils during public exam periods |
| T | Gypsy, Roma, Traveller absence | Authorised absence | Family travelling for economic / occupational purposes (and child not dual registered with a school in a different geographical area) |
| U | Late arrival after closure of register | Unauthorised absence | |
| V | Educational visit or trip | Present | Trips or visits, including residential trips, organised by school or by an organisation approved by school |
| W | Work experience | Present | Attendance should be tracked and any absence from the work experience placement should be recorded in the register using the appropriate code |
| X | Not required to be in school | Attendance not required | When non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend. If a child is expected to attend full time whilst still not of compulsory school age, this code should not be used. Use of this code can potentially hide other safeguarding concerns. |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | Attendance not required | School site is closed partially or fully due to an unavoidable cause/ transport provided by the school or LA is not available / time of local or national emergency resulting in widespread disruption to travel |
| Z | Pupil not on admission register | Attendance not required | Register set up in advance of pupils joining the school. Schools must put pupils on the admissions register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend. |
| # | Planned whole or partial school closure | Attendance not required | Holiday periods (including bank holidays), INSET days, and use of school as a polling station. This code should also be used to record different term dates that have been agreed for different year groups (e.g. staggered starts for secondary school year groups in the Autumn Term). |

Appendix 2

Leave of Absence during Term Time

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 state that leave of absence shall not be granted unless:

- an application has been made in advance to the head teacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides; **and**
- the head teacher, or a person authorised by the head teacher, considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **exceptional circumstances** relating to the application.

This policy clarifies:

- there is no entitlement in law for parents to take their child on authorised leave of absence during term-time without obtaining prior approval from the school.
- the procedures to be followed whereby parents/carers can make applications for their child to be granted discretionary leave of absence during term-time.
- that each application will be considered by head teachers according to the individual circumstances surrounding the request. Head teachers determine the number of days, if any, a child can be away from school.
- the sorts of 'exceptional circumstances' which may warrant the head teacher granting discretionary leave of absence.

Examples of exceptional circumstances which could justify approval include:

- members of the armed forces who are returning home from active duties.
- parents / carers who are unable to take leave at certain times of the year (and can evidence that this is the case) e.g. emergency services personnel.
- the death of an immediate family member, e.g. parent, sibling or grandparent.
- an extended family that wishes to spend time together for support during a time of acute crisis.
- families who can evidence that they have experienced genuine disruption to their originally agreed return travel plans, e.g. severe weather conditions or civil unrest.

Education Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Leave of Absence during Term Time

Headteachers should write to the parents/carers to confirm whether or not their request for leave of absence has been approved. In cases where a request for leave has not been approved, parents should be informed that they face the possibility of being issued with penalty notices for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance at school should they go ahead with their plans.

However, it may not always be possible to issue warning letters in advance of leave of absence in instances where leave of absence is either not requested by parents, or requested with insufficient notice for a warning letter to be sent.

In the case of a pupil granted leave of absence, but that pupil then fails to return to school within 5 school days (10 sessions) of the agreed return date, a request to issue penalty notices to the parents can be made to Wirral Attendance Service (unless the school is satisfied that the pupil is unable to attend by reason of sickness or other unavoidable cause).

Parents should also be advised that if their child fails to return to school within 10 school days of the given return date, and joint enquiries made by school and the authority have failed to locate the child's whereabouts, they run the risk of their child's name being removed from the school roll, with no guarantee of re-admission. Prior to removal of a pupil's name from the school's admissions register, school should discuss the pupil's individual circumstances with their named Locality Attendance Officer or the CME Officer at Wirral Attendance Service. School and the Local Authority are jointly responsible for making all reasonable enquiries to locate a missing pupil prior to removal from roll.

Application for Leave During Term Time

Parents/Carers must ask permission for their child to be absent during term time, and it is at the Headteacher's discretion to decide whether or not the absence will be authorised. The Headteacher may authorise leave during term time for *exceptional circumstances only*. If leave is taken without permission, or no application is made, parents/carers risk being issued with an Education Penalty Notice.

Parents/Carers wishing to apply for their child to have leave of absence from school should complete this form and return it to school for authorisation at least two weeks before the proposed leave.

| PARENT'S/CARER'S SECTION | | | | |
|--|--|-------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Surname of child | | | First name | |
| Date of birth | | Year | Class | |
| Full name of parent (1) | | | | |
| Address of parent (1) | | | | |
| Postcode | | | Telephone No. | |
| Full name of parent (2) | | | Telephone No. | |
| Address of parent (2) | | | | |
| Do you consider this request to be due to exceptional circumstances? If so, please outline the reasons why | | | | |
| Departure and return date | | | | |
| Would your child miss any national tests or examinations? | | | | Yes / No |
| Has she/he had leave during term-time in the last 12 months? (If so, please give dates, reasons, and number of school days leave) | | | | Yes / No |
| | | | | |
| Are there any other siblings? If yes please state their name and the school they attend | | | | Yes / No |
| | | | | |
| Parent/Carer signature | | | Date | |

| SCHOOL SECTION |
|----------------|
|----------------|

| | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Holiday in Term Time | (i) approved _____ school days | (ii) not approved _____ school days |
| Reasons | | |
| Date discussed with parent/ carer and/or date informed of approval/ non-approval | | |
| Headteacher's signature | | Date |

Appendix 3

Health Advice

| Infection | Absence Period | Comments |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Athlete's Foot | None | Athlete's foot is not a serious condition. Treatment is recommended. |
| Chicken Pox | Five days from onset of rash and all the lesions have crusted over. | |
| Cold Sores (Herpes simplex) | None. | Avoid kissing and contact with the sores are generally mild and heal without treatment. |
| Conjunctivitis | None. | If an out/break occurs, consult your local HPT. |
| Diarrhoea and vomiting | Whilst symptomatic and 48 hours after the last symptoms. | See section in chapter 9. |
| Diphtheria * | Exclusion is essential. Always consult with your local HPT. | Preventable by vaccination. Family contacts must be excluded until cleared to return by your local HPT. |
| Flu (influenza) | Until recovered | Report outbreaks to your local HPT. |
| Glandular Fever | None | |
| Hand, Foot and Mouth | None | Contact your local HPT if many children are affected. Exclusion may be considered in some circumstances. |
| Headlice | None | Treatment recommended. |
| Hepatitis A* | Exclude until 7 days after onset of jaundice (or 7 days after symptom onset if no jaundice). | In an outbreak of Hepatitis, A, your local HPT will advise on control measures. |
| Hepatitis B*, C*, HIV | None | Hepatitis B and C and HIV are blood borne viruses that are not infectious through casual contact. Contact your local HPT for more advice. |
| Impetigo | Until lesions are crusted/healed or 48 hours after treatment. | Antibiotics treatment speeds healing and reduces the infectious period. |
| Measles* | Four days from onset of rash and recovered. | Preventable by vaccination (2 doses of MMR). Promote MMR for all pupils and staff. Pregnant staff contacts should seek prompt advice from their GP or midwife. |
| Meningococcal Meningitis/ septicaemia | Until recovered | Meningitis ACWY and B are preventable by vaccination (see national schedule @ www.nhs.uk) Your local HPT will advise on any action needed. |
| Meningitis* due to other bacteria | Until recovered | Hib and Pneumococcal meningitis are preventable by vaccination (see national schedule @ www.nhs.uk) Your local HPT will advise on any action needed. |
| Meningitis* Viral | None | Milder illness than bacterial meningitis. Siblings or other close contacts of a case need to be excluded. |
| MRSA | None | Good hygiene, in particular handwashing and environmental cleaning, are important to minimise spread. Contact your local HPT for more information. |

| Infection | Absence Period | Comments |
|--|---|---|
| Mumps* | Five days after onset of swelling | Preventable by vaccination with 2 doses of MMR (see national schedule @ www.nhs.uk). Promote MMR for all pupils and staff. |
| Ringworm | Not usually required | Treatment is needed. |
| Rubella (German Measles) | Four days from onset | Preventable by vaccination with 2 doses of MMR (see national schedule @ www.nhs.uk). Promote MMR for all pupils and staff. Pregnant staff contacts should seek prompt advice from their GP or Midwife. |
| Scarlet Fever | Excluded until 24 hours of appropriate antibiotics | A person is infectious for 2-3 weeks if antibiotics are not administered. In the event of 2 or more cases please contact your local HPT. |
| Scabies | Can return after first treatment | Household and close contacts require treatment at the same time. |
| Slapped cheek/fifth disease/ parvo virus B19 | None (once rash has developed) | Pregnant contacts of case should consult with their GP or Midwife. |
| Threadworms | None | Treatment recommended for child & household |
| Tonsillitis | None | There are many causes but most cases are due to viruses and do not need an antibiotic treatment. |
| Tuberculosis (TB) | Always consult with your local HPT BEFORE disseminating information to staff/ parents/ carers | Only pulmonary (lung) TB is infectious to others. Needs close, prolonged contact spread. |
| Warts and Verrucae | None | Verrucae should be covered in swimming pools, gyms and changing rooms. |
| Whooping Cough (Pertussis)* | Two days from starting antibiotics treatment, or 21 days from onset of symptoms if no antibiotics | Preventable by vaccination. After treatment, Non-infections coughing may continue for any weeks. Your local HPT will organise any contact tracing. |

*Denotes a notification disease. It is a statutory requirement that doctors report a notifiable disease to the proper officer of the local authority (usually a consultant in communicable disease control). Health protection Agency (2010) Guidance on infection control in schools and other childcare settings. HPA: London

Appendix 4**Sample Letter
Attendance Expectations**

[First name / surname]

[Address 1]

[Address 2]

[Address 3]

[Postcode]

[Insert date]

Dear [insert parent / carer name],

If your child's attendance is below 90% they are classed as a 'persistent absentee'. We understand that children can be absent due to illness, however, we need to ensure that all children are accessing the good teaching and learning we offer to succeed, not just at XXXXXXXX, but when they leave for high school and later on in life.

If your child's attendance falls below 90% and has absence due to illness we will require medical evidence. This could be in the form of a doctor's note or prescription for medication. This is important for us to be able to maintain accurate records. It also helps us identify areas where we can support too. If we fail to receive evidence, the absence will not be authorised.

Please be aware that as part of the ongoing support we are offering parents to improve attendance, we may contact you via telephone, write to you or make a home visit to see how we can work together to improve your child's attendance. If your child's attendance does not improve you are liable to prosecution by the Local Authority, but it is our aim to support you and your family to see that attendance is improved so this does not happen.

We look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely,

[Insert name]

Headteacher

Appendix 5**Sample Letter
Attendance below 90%**

[First name / surname]

[Address 1]

[Address 2]

[Address 3]

[Postcode]

[Insert date]

Dear [insert parent / carer name],

Although we appreciate that children do become poorly on occasion, we still need to ensure that all children are accessing the good teaching and learning that we offer and support our parents where we can for them to be able to access this.

Unfortunately, I am writing to you today to inform you that the attendance of (child's name) has fallen below 90% (insert child's percentage attendance). A pupil with attendance below 90% is classed as a 'Persistent Absentee' by the Department for Education.

We believe that it is important that all parents are aware of their children's attendance figures so that we can work together in order to raise attendance for every child as soon as possible.

We will continue to monitor (child's name) attendance closely and keep you updated.

Please do not hesitate to contact our Attendance Leaders, [Name], or our Attendance Officer [Name], for further information or if you would like support and advice in achieving this target.

Yours sincerely

[Insert name]

Headteacher

Appendix 6**Sample Letter****Absence reason required**

[First name / surname]

[Address 1]

[Address 2]

[Address 3]

[Postcode]

[Insert date]

Dear [insert parent / carer name],

Attendance and punctuality are very important to us here at XXXXXXX and we are striving to build firm foundations of both so your child will be ready to start secondary school, further education and employment, understanding their importance.

According to our records (child's name) has been absent on the date/s shown below and we have not yet received an absence note or telephone call giving the reason. Several attempts were made to contact you without success.

It is your responsibility as a parent to contact school on the first day of your child's absence before 9:30 a.m. to let us know why your child is not in school. We are legally required to record reasons for absence from school, therefore until we hear from you any absence will remain unauthorised.

Will you please enter the reason/s for (child's name) absence next to the dates on the slip below and return it to school as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Name

[Inclusion Officer / Lead]

[?]-----

(child's name and class)

(date absent)

I have written the reason/s for absence next to the relevant date/s

Signed _____ Parent

Appendix 7**Sample Letter****Home visit – no answer**

[First name / surname]

[Address 1]

[Address 2]

[Address 3]

[Postcode]

[Insert date]

Dear [insert parent / carer name],

A member of staff called at your address today.

This was because we had not heard from you by 10:30am regarding the absence of your child. School made several attempts to contact you on the numbers you had provided, but, as we were unable to reach you for an explanation, we attempted a home visit to ensure all was well.

If we are still unable to get a response from you by the end of the school day, we may need to report this to the police as a safeguarding concern.

This procedure is in place to ensure that we know where your child is and that you are all safe.

Please call the school ASAP on [insert contact number] to let us know why your child is absent today.

If your child is off in the future, please follow the absence reporting procedure, by calling the school office by 9:30am on their first day of absence.

Yours sincerely

[Insert name]

Headteacher

Appendix 8**Sample Letter****Letter 1 re School Attendance Panel**

Dear [parent],

School Attendance Panel Meeting

I am writing to express concern regarding your child's [child's name] level of attendance at school which has now fallen to [x%] and to invite you to an Attendance Panel Meeting to discuss how we can help to improve the situation. The meeting will be with [Head Teacher or Attendance Officer] and [any other professional]. Together we will identify the concerns and draw up a very brief Action Plan. This will include a target for attendance and a review date.

We are keen to help you to ensure that [child's name] attends school as regularly as possible and makes good progress in school. We would like to meet with you at **[Time and date]**. **If you are unable to attend for any reason please telephone me on [telephone number] and if necessary we will reschedule the meeting.**

Please note that parents who refuse to cooperate with School Attendance Panels may be referred to the Wirral Attendance Service who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days. Parents who do not pay the Fixed Penalty Notice may be prosecuted under Education Act 1996, Section 444 or the Local Authority may apply for an Education Supervision Order.

In addition to, or instead of, the above enforcement options, and to ensure that we have explored all avenues of possible support, school may also seek advice from the Vulnerable Children's meeting, a multi-disciplinary panel who meet regularly to discuss such cases. The panel includes health, social care and education colleagues so that we can look at any additional support that may benefit the family and enable your child to attend school on a more regular basis. You may receive a telephone call from a health professional prior to your child being discussed at this meeting.

You may also wish to access further support for yourself via <https://familytoolbox.co.uk/> or your child may find some support for themselves via <https://www.zillowirral.co.uk/>

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

Appendix 9**Sample Letter****Letter 2a re School Attendance Panel**

Dear [parent],

School Attendance Panel Meeting

I wrote to you on [date letter 1 sent] to express concern regarding your child's [child's name] level of attendance at school which has now fallen to [x%] and to invite you to an Attendance Panel Meeting to discuss how we can help to improve the situation but you were unable to attend and the meeting has been rescheduled. The meeting will be with [Head Teacher or Attendance Officer] and [other professional]. Together we will identify the concerns and draw up a very brief Action Plan. This will include a target for attendance and a review date.

We are keen to help you to ensure that [child's name] attends school as regularly as possible and makes good progress in school. We would like to meet with you at **[Time and date]**. **If you are unable to attend for any reason please telephone me on [telephone number] and if necessary we will reschedule the meeting.**

Please note that parents who refuse to cooperate with School Attendance Panels may be referred to the Wirral Attendance Service who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days. Parents who do not pay the Fixed Penalty Notice may be prosecuted under Education Act 1996, Section 444 or the Local Authority may apply for an Education Supervision Order.

In addition to, or instead of, the above enforcement options, and to ensure that we have explored all avenues of possible support, school may also seek advice from the Vulnerable Children's meeting, a multi-disciplinary panel who meet regularly to discuss such cases. The panel includes health, social care and education colleagues so that we can look at any additional support that may benefit the family and enable your child to attend school on a more regular basis. You may receive a telephone call from a health professional prior to your child being discussed at this meeting.

You may also wish to access further support for yourself via <https://familytoolbox.co.uk/> or your child may find some support for themselves via <https://www.zillowirral.co.uk/>

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

Appendix 10**Sample Letter****Letter 2b re School Attendance Panel**

Dear [parent],

School Attendance Panel Meeting

Further to our Attendance Panel Meeting on [date of meeting] I am writing to arrange a further meeting to review progress as we discussed. The meeting will be with [Head Teacher or Attendance Officer] and [other professional]. At the meeting we will also review the brief Action Plan we agreed.

We are keen to help you to ensure that [child's name] attends school as regularly as possible and makes good progress in school. We would like to meet with you at **[Time and date]**. **If you are unable to attend for any reason please telephone me on [telephone number] and if necessary we will reschedule the meeting.**

Please note that parents who refuse to cooperate with School Attendance Panels may be referred to the Wirral Attendance Service who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days. Parents who do not pay the Fixed Penalty Notice may be prosecuted under Education Act 1996, Section 444 or the Local Authority may apply for an Education Supervision Order.

In addition to, or instead of, the above enforcement options, and to ensure that we have explored all avenues of possible support, school may also seek advice from the Vulnerable Children's meeting, a multi-disciplinary panel who meet regularly to discuss such cases. The panel includes health, social care and education colleagues so that we can look at any additional support that may benefit the family and enable your child to attend school on a more regular basis. You may receive a telephone call from a health professional prior to your child being discussed at this meeting.

You may also wish to access further support for yourself via <https://familytoolbox.co.uk/> or your child may find some support for themselves via <https://www.zillowirral.co.uk/>

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

Appendix 11**Attendance Report Card**

LOGO

XXXXX Primary School

Attendance/Punctuality Report Card

Summer 2 Term 20....

Name:.....

Class:.....

Summer 2 Term

Week Beginning:

My Current Attendance:.....%

Week 1

| | Teacher Signature at Start of Day |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| Monday | |
| Tuesday | |
| Wednesday | |
| Thursday | |
| Friday | |

Week 2

| | Teacher Signature at Start of Day |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| Monday | |
| Tuesday | |
| Wednesday | |
| Thursday | |
| Friday | |

Week 3

| | Teacher Signature at Start of Day |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| Monday | |
| Tuesday | |
| Wednesday | |
| Thursday | |
| Friday | |

Week 4

| | Teacher Signature at Start of Day |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| Monday | |
| Tuesday | |
| Wednesday | |
| Thursday | |
| Friday | |

Week 5

| | Teacher Signature at Start of Day |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| Monday | |
| Tuesday | |
| Wednesday | |
| Thursday | |
| Friday | |

Week 6

| | Teacher Signature at Start of Day |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| Monday | |
| Tuesday | |
| Wednesday | |
| Thursday | |
| Friday | |

My New Attendance:.....%

Appendix 12

Guidance for Schools on the use of reduced timetables

1. Purpose

This guidance is intended to safeguard both pupil and school, should a reduced timetable be required. It is intended to establish agreed approaches for all maintained Wirral Schools, Academy Schools, Free Schools and alternative provision settings, in the appropriate use of reduced timetables (sometimes referred to as 'part-time' timetables).

2. Introduction

The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to identify and track any pupil missing from education. Any pupil on a reduced timetable is potentially at risk of missing education and therefore falls within this remit.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School and college staff should follow the school's or college's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Schools should put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

The new Local Authority inspection framework now includes the need for each authority to report robustly on school age children who are not in full-time education. This establishes the need for Wirral Council to have guidance in place for all pupils on reduced timetables. It is important to highlight that there is no statutory basis upon which to establish a reduced timetable, however, in exceptional circumstances, schools may need to implement part-time arrangements in order to support a pupil who cannot attend school full-time for an agreed and time-limited period.

Wirral Council remains committed to supporting all children's entitlement to a full-time education, and makes clear the requirement that a reduced timetable cannot be implemented without written agreement from parent / carer and agreement from the EHCP Coordinator at Wirral Council where appropriate. Where a part-time timetable is in place, this should always be in the best interests of the child.

Schools have a safeguarding responsibility for all pupils on their roll and therefore must be aware that even with parental agreement to any arrangement they make, they are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils attending any off-site provision during school hours.

3. Full-time Education

- All education should be suitable to a child's age, ability and aptitude, taking into account any special educational needs.
- There is an assumption that pupils should receive full-time education consistent with their Key Stage. Schools have a statutory duty to provide full time education for all pupils. It is illegal for schools to discriminate against pupils on the basis of their special educational needs and/or disability.
- A timetable is considered reduced when it consists of something less than that which is provided to the majority of the pupil's peers in that setting.
- There is no statutory definition of 'full time' education, but guidance suggests the following periods as full time:

| Age | Hours |
|-------|-------|
| 5–7 | 21 |
| 8–11 | 23.5 |
| 12–14 | 24 |
| 14–16 | 25 |

4. When might a reduced timetable be used?

- **As part of an in-school support package:** The school, parent/carer and other professionals agree that a short-term (ideally no longer than 6 weeks) reduced timetable would support a pupil who has become disaffected, to regain success. This would be a closely monitored intervention to address and manage the impact of significantly challenging behaviour, emotional, or social needs.
- **Medical reasons:** A pupil has a serious medical condition where recovery is the priority outcome. These arrangements would be part of a "medical plan" agreed between the school and health professionals. Please see Supporting Pupils at School with medical conditions before offering a reduced timetable for this reason.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>
- **Reintegration:** As part of a planned reintegration into school following an extended period out of school following non-attendance, school refusal, etc. (ideally no longer than 6 weeks).

5. Good Practice

In circumstances where the school consider that it may be necessary to establish a reduced timetable for a pupil, the school should:

- Notify the Attendance Service of its intention to implement a reduced timetable for a pupil. The appropriate form needs to be completed and submitted via schoolattendance@wirral.gov.uk.
- Convene a meeting to discuss the proposals for a reduced timetable. This must include parent / carer. This will also include Wirral Council where the pupil is a looked after child (a member of Virtual School), has an allocated social worker, or has a statement of SEN / Education Health and Care Plan (the EHCP Coordinator), and may include Early Help professionals who form part of any Team Around the Family.

- Establish a plan, for example a Pastoral Support Plan, Individual Learning Plan, Personal Education Plan etc., which will contain details of the proposed timetable to get the child back into full-time education.
- Review the schedule of supportive interventions that will accompany this reduction in time at school.
- Develop outcome and exit strategies that will identify to all stakeholders when the intervention has been successful
- Confirm and communicate the named person responsible for the plan within the school.
- Consider safeguarding measures for the duration of the reduced timetable. The school must carry out a risk assessment before implementation and the details recorded.
- Ensure that the parent / carer agrees the plan and teaching hours. A reduction in hours should not be implemented without parental / carer agreement.
- Consider completing an Early Help Assessment Tool to establish if there are wider needs requiring support from other partner agencies.
- Monitor the overall use of this strategy within school and report outcomes to governors each term.
- Ensure effective communication with parents / carers and Wirral Council with regard to progress towards full-time reintegration to school.

6. Monitoring and Review

The school must:

- Report the reduced timetable on the appropriate form to the Attendance Service as soon as it becomes operational by sending a signed copy of the completed and signed part-time timetable agreement form.
- Send a copy of subsequent reviews and any extension plans.
- Record the child's attendance accurately on the attendance register.
- Use the C Code when a pupil has a reduced timetable including sessions which have been mutually agreed not to involve attendance at school or at an alternative provision. The school must be satisfied that appropriate arrangements are in place for the care and welfare of the pupil during the time when they would otherwise be at school.
- Use the B Code if the pupil is receiving off-site provision, which is approved and monitored on a daily basis by school. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where the pupil is at home doing school work.
- Use the D Code where a pupil is registered at two schools. The D code only applies where a pupil is attending a school other than their home school and where that school is coding the pupil's daily attendance and absence.
- Monitor the overall use of this strategy within school and report back to governors termly.
- Ensure effective communication with parents / carer and Wirral Council with regard to progress towards full-time reintegration to school.
- **For Census purposes record these pupils as full-time pupils.**

7. Wirral Council Responsibilities

- Request copies of the agreed plans in relation to part time education.
- Ensure that reduced timetables are appropriately recorded.
- Ensure that copies of part time education plans are shared with Children's Social Care where pupils are subject to Child Protection or Child in Need plans.
- Ensure a copy of the plan is provided to the Virtual School when a pupil is Looked After.
- Discuss any cases with schools when a pupil has been on a reduced timetable for longer than 6 weeks, or longer than the specified period in the original plan

8. For advice and support please contact:

Damian Stormont, Attendance Service Manager
0151 666 4964 damianstormont@wirral.gov.uk

PART-TIME TIMETABLE AGREEMENT FORM

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Pupil Forename: | Pupil Surname: |
| Address: | Post Code: |
| Date of Birth: | Ethnic Origin: |
| Unique pupil No. (UPN): | School Year: |
| Current School: | |
| Name of Lead Person in School: | |

| | | |
|---|-------------------|--------|
| Is the child currently known to social care? | YES | NO |
| If yes , who is the named social worker: | | |
| Is the social worker in agreement with this plan? | YES | NO |
| Is the child currently in the TAF process? | YES | NO |
| Is the Lead Professional aware of this plan? | No identified SEN | K EHCP |
| Child's SEN status | YES | NO |
| Who is the EHCP Coordinator: | | |
| Has this plan been agreed with EHCP coordinator? | YES | NO |
| Has the child previously had a Fixed Term Exclusion | YES | NO |
| If yes, the number of sessions missed due to FTE | | |

Parent 1

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|----------|--|-----------|--|
| Title | | Forename | | Surname | |
| Address | | | | Post Code | |
| Tel No. | | | | | |
| email | | | | | |
| Relationship to Pupil | | | | | |

Parent 2

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|----------|--|-----------|--|
| Title | | Forename | | Surname | |
| Address | | | | Post Code | |
| Tel No. | | | | | |
| email | | | | | |
| Relationship to Pupil | | | | | |

Reason for part time timetable: please tick the most appropriate option

☐ Medical issue
☐ Emotional/Mental Health
☐ Family/Friendship issue
☐ Re-integration programme following absence
☐ SEND – identified/awaiting specialist placement
☐ SEND – unidentified/undiagnosed needs
☐ Other

Timetable (please insert the hours that the child is expected to be in school):

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| | | | | |

Total number of hours per week:

Objectives of the part-time timetable:

Any other comments relating to this part-time timetable:

| | |
|---|--|
| Date of meeting agreeing the part-time timetable: | |
| Start date of part-time timetable: | |
| Review date of part-time timetable: | |
| End date of part-time timetable: | |

I understand my child has been placed on a part-time timetable for a limited period.

I have discussed the matter fully with the school and agree, during the period of the part-time timetable to:

- take full responsibility for my child during the hours when not attending school
- ensure there is supervision of schoolwork during those hours
- ensure there is a flow between school and home for marking and guidance
- take full responsibility for the health and safety of my child when they are not in school.

| | |
|------------------------------|-------|
| Signature (Parent/Carer): | Date: |
|------------------------------|-------|

During the period of the part-time timetable the school will:

- monitor the effectiveness of the part-time timetable
- hold a review on the agreed date and inform Wirral Attendance Service of the outcome
- provide work for the child to do whilst at home and mark all work completed
- mark the school register with a C for any session missed due to the agreed plan.

| | |
|------------------------|-------|
| Signature (School): | Date: |
|------------------------|-------|

Appendix 13

| Grounds for deleting a pupil of compulsory school age from the school admission register set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended | |
|--|---|
| 1 | 8 (1) (a) - where the pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school. |
| 2 | 8 (1) (b) - except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the pupil should be registered at more than one school, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) or regulation 9, that he has been registered as a pupil at another school. |
| 3 | 8 (1) (c) - where a pupil is registered at more than one school, and in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (j) or (m) or regulation 9, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which he is registered has given consent to the deletion. |
| 4 | 8 (1) (d) - in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school. |
| 5 | 8 (1) (e) - except in the case of a boarder, that he has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school at which he is registered. |
| 6 | <p>8 (1) (f) - in the case of a pupil granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation 7(1A), that —</p> <p>(i) the pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted;</p> <p>(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and</p> <p>(iii) the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.</p> |
| 7 | 8 (1) (g) - that he is certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he nor his parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age. |

| | |
|----|--|
| 8 | <p>8 (1) (h) - that he has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and —</p> <p>(i) at no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2);</p> <p>(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and</p> <p>(iii) the proprietor of the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.</p> |
| 9 | <p>8 (1) (i) - that he is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to the school at the end of that period.</p> |
| 10 | <p>8 (1) (j) - that the pupil has died.</p> |
| 11 | <p>8 (1) (k) - that the pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and—</p> <p>(i) the relevant person has indicated that the pupil will cease to attend the school; or</p> <p>(ii) the pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements for admission to the school's sixth form.</p> |
| 12 | <p>8 (1) (l) - in the case of a pupil at a school other than a maintained school, an Academy, a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts, that he has ceased to be a pupil of the school.</p> |
| 13 | <p>8 (1) (m) - that he has been permanently excluded from the school.</p> |
| 14 | <p>8 (1) (n) - where the pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, that he has not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the school.</p> |
| 15 | <p>8 (1) (o) where—</p> <p>(i) the pupil is a boarder at a maintained school or an Academy;</p> <p>(ii) charges for board and lodging are payable by the parent of the pupil; and</p> <p>(iii) those charges remain unpaid by the pupil's parent at the end of the school term to which they relate.</p> |

RESTRICTED Data
Wirral Attendance Service: Leaver Notification

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| School | | Date form submitted | Click here to enter a date. |
| Full name of pupil | | UPN | |
| DOB | | Year Group | Choose an item. |
| Gender | Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> | Ethnicity | Choose an item. |
| Current (or former) home address | | | |
| Full name(s) of parent(s) / carer(s) and relationship to child | | | |
| Parent / carer contact 'phone number(s) | | Contact email address | |
| New school (if known) | | Date of Admission | |
| New local authority (if known) | | | |
| New home address (if known / applicable) | | | |
| Has the pupil been removed from the school roll? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | What grounds* have been used / are proposed to be used? | Choose an item. |
| Date of removal? | Click here to enter a date. | Has this child been formally referred to CME? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |

** In accordance with regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 which specify the grounds under which schools can lawfully remove a pupil's name from their admissions register.*

The effective sharing of information between schools and local authorities is crucial to ensuring that all children & young people of statutory school age are safeguarded and receiving a suitable education. Under the amended 2016 Regulations, all schools (including Academies, Free and Independent Schools) are required to inform the LA as soon as possible when they are about to delete a pupil's name from the admission register.

Please send to: schoolattendance@wirral.gov.uk

Appendix 14

Statutory Guidance:

- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073619/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance.pdf
- [School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures](#)
- [Children missing education](#)
- [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education](#)
- [Alternative provision](#)
- [Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school](#)
- [School exclusion](#)

Wirral Attendance Service Contacts:

- School Attendance: schoolattendance@wirral.gov.uk
- Enforcement Action: educationpenaltynotices@wirral.gov.uk
- Children Missing from Education: cme@wirral.gov.uk
- Elective Home Education: ehe@wirral.gov.uk
- Children in Entertainment / Child Employment Licensing: childlicensing@wirral.gov.uk

Appendix 15

Wirral Authority's Vulnerable Children's Panel (VCP)

The Vulnerable Children's Panel (VCP) started during national lockdown (Spring 2020) to help schools and services come together to tackle attendance issues of some of our most vulnerable children, and to find ways of working together to ensure that we could at least establish that they were safe, even if not attending.

The panel has now become a permanent aspect of our work, as the multi-agency working has proved to be so helpful.

From November 2021, the work of the VCP will prioritise an especially vulnerable group: children and young people experiencing domestic abuse in their homes or known to have experienced domestic abuse in the past. These children have been identified as having a higher rate of absence than any other vulnerable group. However, we want to ensure there are appropriate routes to follow up on serious attendance issues for **all children** that schools are concerned about.

Chair:

Di Hollis (Head of Service: Schools and Communities)

Membership:

- Family Matters
- Wirral Attendance Service
- Children's Social Care
- 0 – 19 Health Team
- Early Years
- Community Matters
- Wirral Ways To Recovery
- Youth and Play
- Contextual Safeguarding
- Hive
- Schools are also welcome to join the meeting to present their individual cases.

Cycle of Meetings:

Weekly (Thursday p.m.)

Purpose:

To discuss and review individual children who are considered vulnerable and who are not attending school regularly. Typically, these are the children within families who are not open to Authority or partner services, and where all school-level strategies have been exhausted.

Attendees at the meeting will look at how best children and young people can be supported, including how they can be supported back to school.

Referrals:

Schools should work with their Locality Attendance Officer (LAO) to review their cases in the usual way. When a case has exhausted all school level strategies and further advice and support is needed, schools should complete the VCP Referral Form and forward to their designated LAO (copying-in schoolattendance@wirral.gov.uk). The LAO will then forward for inclusion at the next VCP meeting and, if appropriate, schools will be invited to join discussions at panel.

It is important that schools inform parents in advance that they are referring their child to the VCP in order to seek any other support that may be available to the child / family to improve attendance at school. Reference should be made to the VCP in correspondence and communications with parents, so that they are aware that school will seek advice from the VCP should attendance concerns be ongoing.

N.B. Children who are already open to Children's Social Care should not be referred to panel. Discussion should be held with the child's social worker to ensure that multi-agency strategies to improve attendance are incorporated within the CIN/CP/CLA Plan and are part of the discussion at regular core group meetings.

Referral to Vulnerable Children's Panel (VCP)

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Pupil Forename: | Pupil Surname: |
| Address: | Post Code: |
| Date of Birth: | Ethnic Origin: |
| Unique pupil No. (UPN): | School Year: |
| Current School: | |
| Overall Attendance % at time of referral: | |
| Form completed by: | Date: |

| | | |
|---|-----|----|
| Has this child / family previously been open to Children's Social Care? | YES | NO |
| Is the child currently in the TAF process? | YES | NO |
| If yes , who is the Lead Professional: | | |
| Does the child have an EHCP? | YES | NO |
| Is the child in receipt of SEND Support? | YES | NO |
| Has the child ever experienced domestic abuse? | YES | NO |
| Has school received an Operation Encompass Referral? | YES | NO |
| If yes , when was this received? | | |
| Would a staff member be available to present the case at a virtual VCP at a given time slot (Thursday after 3.00 p.m.)? | YES | NO |

Parent 1

| | | | | | |
|---|--|----------|--|-----------|--|
| Title | | Forename | | Surname | |
| Address | | | | Post Code | |
| Tel No. | | | | | |
| email | | | | | |
| Relationship to Pupil | | | | | |
| Has parent been made aware of this referral? YES / NO | | | | | |

Parent 2

| | | | | | |
|---|--|----------|--|-----------|--|
| Title | | Forename | | Surname | |
| Address | | | | Post Code | |
| Tel No. | | | | | |
| email | | | | | |
| Relationship to Pupil | | | | | |
| Has parent been made aware of this referral? YES / NO | | | | | |

| |
|--|
| Siblings details: Names / Age / DOB / School (if known) |
| |
| What concerns do school have about this child / family? |
| |
| What actions have school taken so far? |
| |
| Have you tried to involve any other agencies to-date? |
| |

| Office use only | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Date of referral: | |
| Date first discussed at VCP: | |
| Date closed to VCP: | |
| Outcomes: | |
| Attendance % at closure: | |

Please send to schoolattendance@wirral.gov.uk