

## WREN'S NEST PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Attendance Policy – December 2015

#### Introduction:

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

#### Why Regular Attendance is so important:

**Learning:** - Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

**Safeguarding:** - Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, we will adhere to 'Working together to Safeguard Children' (March 2013):

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children have the best life chances.

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

#### Principles

Children are expected to be in school, on time, every day that the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. It is an offence for a parent or carer to allow a child to be absent from school without a good reason.

Every half day absence has to be classified as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This decision can only be made by school, not by parents. In order to make this decision school needs to be informed of the reason why a child is not in school. This information can be given to school in writing or by telephone. An absence note is filled in to record the reason for absence and these are forwarded to the attendance staff. If parents do not contact school themselves attendance staff operate a system of first day contact calls. If parents cannot be contacted by telephone a letter will be issued on the second day of absence.

Registers are amended accordingly on a daily basis. All Absence letters sent in to class teachers should be forwarded to Mrs Armitage or Mrs Hill to be recorded and stored.

**Authorised absence** – These are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason:

- Illness (I) or other unavoidable cause (C)
- Medical/Dental Appointments (M)
- Holidays in exceptional circumstances only, agreed with the Head Teacher

**Unauthorised absence** – These are mornings or afternoons away from school for reasons which school cannot authorise:

- Truancy
- Holidays
- Absences for which school has not been given a reason
- Shopping, looking after other children, oversleeping, birthdays
- Absences of children whose attendance is a concern and parents have been requested to supply medical evidence.

### **Late arrival**

School aims to foster good habits of attendance and punctuality.

### **Morning Registration**

Children should arrive at school between 8.40am and 8.50am. Early Start activities start in the classroom at 8:45am and the registration period closes at 9.00am.

If children arrive after this time they will receive a late mark (L). Mrs Hill will record the names and time of arrival after 9.00 in the late book. The registers close at 9.30am. Any pupils arriving after this time should report to the school office and school will record that children have arrived but the session will be recorded as an absence (U). Afternoon Registration:

Foundation	12.45 – 12.50 pm
KS1	12.45 - 12.50 pm
Year 3/4	1pm – 1.05 pm
Year 5/6	1.30 – 1.35 pm

Afternoon registers close 5 minutes after the end of registration. Late arrivals should report to the office.

School may decide not to authorise the late arrival of children who are persistently late. This will be recorded as U on the register. Parents will be notified of this by letter.

### **Reception Classes & Nursery**

Nursery registers will be filled in on paper by nursery staff and the office staff will input the data onto Integrus. Late arrivals in Nursery and Reception classes will be amended by office staff and arrival times will be entered into the notes section on Integrus.

### **Holidays**

From September 2013 school cannot not authorise any holiday taken during term time. This is a directive to all schools following Government legislation (The government made an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 in September 2013 to reflect this.)

Only in **exceptional circumstances** will the Head Teacher be able to authorise a leave of absence from school. All applications requesting authorised leave of absence for a holiday must be made in writing to the Head Teacher at least 5 school days prior to the requested leave date. The Headteacher will inform

the parent/carers of their decision in writing. A general guide for parents, is leave for any holiday, activity or event that could be arranged during the annual 13 week holiday time would not be authorised.

School requests that any parent who still takes their child out of school for a holiday fills in a 'Notification of Leave Form'. These are available from the school office and will mean that we are not un-necessarily concerned when a child is not present in school for a period of time. Any unauthorised absence accrued due to holidays or for any other reason can result in referral to the Education Welfare Service and could have legal consequences.

Unlike the majority of schools, Wren's Nest has taken the decision not to automatically issue penalty fines for those taking holiday, but each case will be reviewed as part of the child's overall absence. If you wish to take a holiday you need to make sure that your child attends school every day they can during the remainder of the year.

Referrals will be made for holidays if attendance is low or if we have not been notified that the child is going on holiday and we do not know their whereabouts. Referrals may also be made for those taking more than one holiday during a year.

We think we have a fair and reasonable policy towards holidays in term time but this does depend on parents also being fair and reasonable.

Codes used in the register: On any occasion that school refuses a request for leave in term time, should parent/carers proceed with the leave it will be recorded as a (G) (family holiday not agreed or in excess of agreement), on schools register. Failure to notify and/or request leave of absence in term time, providing at least 5 day notice will result in all absence being recorded as (O) (unauthorised absence not covered by any other description).

### **Medical appointments**

Parents are requested where possible to make medical appointments outside school hours. Where this is not possible we try to encourage early or late appointments and ask parents to inform school in advance. Children should be signed in and out at the School Office. Medical appointments are marked as M.

## **Involving Parents:**

### **School Reports**

Attendance figures for the year will be given on each child's school report at the end of the Summer Term. This includes a breakdown of authorised and unauthorised absence.

### **Wren's Nest "Wise Up" Programme**

Parents can track their child's attendance figures throughout the year. Wise Up attendance reports will be sent out at the beginning of the Spring, Summer and Autumn Terms. Attendance on these reports is banded to indicate if it is satisfactory or not. The bands are as follows:

Gold	97% +
Silver	95-97%
Bronze	93-95%
Red	90-93%
Wise Up	Below 90%

Children receive badges or awards for achieving Bronze, Silver or Gold levels. Sending out the reports and making the awards at the start of a term/year is to make sure everyone has attendance fresh in their minds on their return to school.

Attendance figures for the year will be given on the child's school report at the end of the Summer Term and this includes an authorised/unauthorised breakdown.

### **September Reminder**

Parents of children with an attendance below 90% during a school year will be contacted by letter at the start of the new school year. Progress will be tracked throughout the year.

### **Problems with attendance**

School has a legal duty to promote attendance and to publish its absence figures to parents. Equally parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend school.

The attendance policy is available for parents on the website or by asking at the school office for a paper copy.

### **Attendance Consultant**

Wren's Nest employs an attendance consultant, Emma O'Sullivan from R & S Attendance Solutions Ltd to advise on attendance issues. Mrs O'Sullivan will contact families where attendance is causing concern and work with them to try to improve the situation. This occurs on a weekly basis.

### **Irregular Attendance:**

Irregular attendance and patterns of absence are monitored weekly. Attendance below 85% and 90% and 93% are targeted, as well as patterns of absence. School staff and the attendance consultant issue letters to inform parents if attendance is causing concern. Mrs Armitage, our Lifelong Learning Manager may speak to parents and the Attendance Consultant may visit the home of children whose attendance is being monitored. Parents may also be invited into school to discuss attendance matters. School may request that medical evidence is produced to evidence a child's absence.

### **The Education Investigation Service**

Where a situation cannot be resolved the case will be referred to the Education Investigation Service. The Education Investigation Service can issue a penalty notice or instigate legal proceedings to prosecute parents or seek an Education Supervision Order on the child and a Parenting Order for the parent/guardian.

Referrals can be made if:

- There is an accumulation of a minimum of 15% unauthorised absence in any time period.
- A holiday in term time has been refused.
- There are 12 sessions of absence in the last 6 weeks.
- Re referral if a further 12 sessions are missed.
- If a child has stopped attending and we do not know their whereabouts. (*See Children Missing Education below*)

Parents may wish to contact the Education Investigation Service themselves to ask for help or information. This service is independent of school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available

from the School Office or by contacting the Local Education Authority Helpline: 01384 814317 (Duty Officer)

### **Children Missing Education**

If a child does not arrive in school the following steps will be taken:

- A telephone call is made to the home address.
- If the child is absent for a second day and we have no contact with parents a 2 day contact letter is taken to the house (or posted).
- If such contacts do not receive a response other named contacts will be contacted and a visit made to the house (if not made at an earlier stage).
- After 10 consecutive days missed the child is referred to the Education Investigation Service as a child missing Education.
- If the child is on a child protection plan they will be referred sooner.
- If the child is considered to be at risk child protection procedures will be followed.
- The EIS will agree a date for the child to be removed from roll – Wren's Nest do not off roll until satisfied by contact with EIS, another authority etc that the child is safe.
- School will continue its own investigations where possible.
- Children moving schools – If a parent indicates that their child is leaving the school they will be requested to complete a form stating their new address, school etc. (*This is in addition to the LEA transfer form for moves within borough.*) The forwarding details forms are supplied to Foundation Stage and the school office.
- Office staff contact the nominated school re UPN, start date, removal from our roll.

The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

**Mrs R. Wylie, (Headteacher) Mrs K. Armitage, (Lifelong Learning Manager), Mrs J. Hill, (Attendance Assistant) and Mrs G. Abrahams, (Chair of Governors with responsibility for attendance)**

### **Improving Attendance Levels**

School staff are committed to working with children and parents to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Strategies to encourage good attendance are:

- Wise Up – 5 attendance categories. Red & Wise Up level. Bronze (93-94.9%), Silver (95-96.9%), Gold (97-100%). Certificates & badges awarded 3 times each year. Gold achievers displayed in class.
- 100% attendance for a term and for the whole year- certificate and prize
- Every half term a group of children (Year 1 & any children new to the school with attendance issues) will have their attendance tracked. Those reaching their attendance target will receive a prize
- Class of the week certificate – presented in assembly together with a rosette towards Class of the Year competition
- Half term class champions attendance cup – presented in assembly.
- Class of the Year certificate and special class trip at the end of the Summer term
- Attendance notice board with school target and figure achieved
- Class Attendance charts showing weekly percentage and an up/down arrow in designated class attendance area

- Staff 'Attendance Champion' in each class. All staff draw attention to these strategies to keep the profile of attendance as high as possible.

### **Monitoring & Evaluation**

- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation by attendance staff
- Termly collation of monitoring data
- Attendance staff/ Attendance Consultant - monitoring and evaluation of progress
- Strategic monitoring and evaluation – Head, Attendance Consultant, LLM and Attendance Governor – Gill Abrahams
- Life Long Learning Manager reports to Governors as part of the Headteacher's termly report.

### **Attendance Targets**

Each year the school sets targets and monitors success against these targets.

In 2014/15 our attendance was 95.8% and we have a target of 96.1% for this academic year (2015/16)

### **Policy Review:**

This policy was reviewed by the Full Governing Body in December 2015