



The LINK
Education Trust
Learning • Inclusion • Nurture • Knowledge



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Wharton Primary School

Written by:	LINK Policy
Written/adopted:	January 2025
Next Review:	January 2026
Ratified by Trustees:	Trustee Board Meeting
Ratified Date:	16.01.25



DID YOU KNOW? A two week holiday in term time means that the highest attendance you can achieve is 94.7%

0 days off in a year 0 lessons missed	100%
2 days off in a year 10 lessons missed	99%
5 days off in a year 25 lessons missed	97%
10 days off in a year 50 lessons missed	95%
14 days off in a year 70 lessons missed	93%
20 days off in a year 100 lessons missed	90%

(Based on an average of 5 lessons per day)

The LINK Education Trust believes that the regular education of all children, irrespective of age, gender, race or ability is vital to every pupil. Regular and prompt attendance allows every child to the education to which they are entitled by law.

We, at Wharton Primary School, together with the other schools in our Trust have a joint approach to school attendance by adopting the same policy and procedures and ensuring consistency across all schools.

We will endeavour to work alongside parents/carers, the local community and the Local Authority Attendance Team. Promoting positive school attendance is everyone's responsibility. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly and on time every day unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable

AIMS and OBJECTIVES

- To demonstrate a strong attendance ethos.
- To apply and follow a clear, consistent policy on attendance which is reviewed on an annual basis.
- To have effective monitoring systems in place through accurate record keeping.
- To use attendance data to improve school and pupil performance.
- To use early intervention strategies (such as Early Help) to ensure that families are supported when necessary.
- To provide incentives for children and parents to improve attendance - and to celebrate good attendance within each school.
- To use good communication between school and home to ensure that parents are aware of the procedures for non-attendance, including the consequences.

EXPECTATIONS

Our school attendance champion is Bethany Thompson

TRUSTEES and Local Governing Boards

- To liaise with school
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- To ensure that the Attendance policy is being followed consistently
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- To review attendance data and monitor effectiveness

SCHOOL –

- Follow the policy and procedures consistently
- Support and work with families to ensure regular attendance for children at school
- Offer incentives and rewards for excellent/good/improving attendance
- Ensure, through good and effective communication, that parents and children all understand the importance of regular attendance and punctuality – and that parents understand the consequences of non-attendance at school.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Send out termly attendance data to parents for all pupils

PUPILS

- Understand the importance of regular school attendance and punctuality through collective responsibility with the school and parents/carers

PARENTS/CARERS

- Read and sign the Home-School agreement
- Ensure that their child attends school every day, on time.
- Contact the school if their child is absent on the same morning.
- Ensure that non-emergency appointments (dentist, doctor) are made outside of school wherever possible. If this cannot be avoided, evidence of attendance at the appointment is necessary.
- Keep school informed of any changes in contact details, including telephone numbers, change of address, and e-mail addresses.

LOCAL AUTHORITY

- To provide consultation and support alongside school for children with attendance below 96%. This includes ...
 - Offering advice on penalty notices
 - Organising attendance panel meetings
 - Issuing fast-track to prosecution notices
 - Working with the school on unannounced home visits to families with absent children
 - Supporting the school in devising and implementing new initiatives to promote attendance and punctuality
 - Analysing school- and pupil data

DEFINITIONS of ABSENCE

Our ambition is for all pupils to achieve 100% attendance.

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

Authorised absence

An absence is authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child is unwell and the parent has followed the correct procedures as set out in the policy.

Only the school can authorise an absence. Parents do not have this authority and consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classed as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is unauthorised when a child is absent without the permission of the school.

Arrival at school after the register has closed

Persistent Absence

Pupils are categorised as being 'persistently absent' if their attendance falls below 90%.

Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Severe Absence

Pupils are categorised as being 'severely absent' if their attendance falls below 50%.

Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at **8.30am**, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site by **8:25am**.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by **9:05am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at **9:15am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be taken by **12:45pm**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.

PROCEDURES FOR ABSENCE

If a child is absent from school, parents/carers MUST make contact with the school on the same morning before 9.15 am – either by telephone to the school office.

Parents will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

The school has a first-day response system in place: The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
 - Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
 - Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
 - Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system
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- A phone call, e-mail or text message is sent to the first parental contact for an absent child by 9.30 am
 - If there is no response by 10 am, the school will phone emergency contact numbers for the family to attempt to establish the cause of absence.
 - If by 10.30 am, no contact has been made with any of the named contacts, a welfare visit may be undertaken. This could be a member of school staff, the School Attendance Officer, Social Worker or Police.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

Absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absences in advance. The Headteacher will handle all requests for absence. The decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to provide evidence of appointments to obtain authorisation for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable.

Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. Where a licence has not been obtained, the Headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

For sporting events or events requiring a performance licence, the absence may be authorised if the parent request is supported by a letter from the relevant company on an official headed paper.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance in advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Mobile children - absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

Attendance Intervention

Stage 1: If attendance falls below 96%, an 'Information on school attendance' letter will be issued to parents.

Stage 2: If attendance falls below 93%, a further 'Continuing school attendance concern' letter will be issued to parents.

Stage 3: If attendance falls below 91% an 'Escalation of Intervention' letter will be issued.

At this point, further action may be taken. This could be a referral to the Salford School Attendance Team.

Stage 4: A further drop in attendance within the next 20 days may result in a Penalty notice.

Penalty notices and legal intervention

The Education (Penalty Notices) (ENGLAND) (AMENDMENT) Regulations 2024

2024 No. 210

Education Penalty Notices for Non-School Attendance

New Legislation came into force on 19th August 2024 regarding issuing penalty notices relating to no school attendance.

Schools are required to consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether to ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice to a parent when their child's absence is unauthorised.

Working within a Code of Conduct, Salford Local Authority can issue a penalty notice to parents or carers if a child has missed a number of sessions without permission from the school.

If your child falls within one or more of these categories within a 10-week period, you may receive a Penalty Notice for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance.

- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence (O coded)
- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised holidays (G Coded)

- Persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration (U coded)
- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absences (O, G and U coded)

Within the new National Framework, there is a national limit to the amount of Fixed Penalty Notices that can be issued to any parent in respect of an individual child, within a three-year period. Each fixed penalty is issued based on per parent/child – therefore where a child has two parents, two fines may be issued.

The fixed penalty notice amount has increased to the following:

- **Penalty Notice One - £160 discounted to £80 if paid within 21 days.**
- **Penalty Notice Two - £160 with no discount offered.**

If a third absence is taken within the three-year period, a parent may be summonsed to the Magistrates Court for knowingly failing to secure good attendance at school (Section 444 (1A) of Education Act 1996).

Please note that from 19th August 2024, schools are not able to authorise any leave of absence for holidays.

The local authority and schools are committed to providing the best possible future for your child. If you have concerns about your child's attendance at school or are experiencing any difficulties, please contact your school and ask for support.

Monitoring & Review

School will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a [half-termly, termly and full-year](#) basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The board of trustees will ensure staff from different schools within the trust regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions.