

## **Policy Statement**

In Weaver Trust, we give clear guidance for staff, pupils and parents about the importance of regular, punctual school attendance and this is a reflection of the caring nature of the school. The Trust acknowledges that it is vital for all pupils to attend regularly, be punctual and therefore maximise the benefits of the education we provide. A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons building on that after their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which parents and school must seek to avoid. We promote good attendance in partnership between home and school, to ensure a positive attitude to education and its long term benefits.

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 This policy sets out the Trust's aims for maintaining a high level of regular attendance and punctuality and also the important administrative steps to be taken to monitor and record levels of attendance.

### **2. Aims**

- To encourage pupils to see the importance of regular, punctual attendance.
- To develop a manageable and regular means of monitoring attendance, including follow up procedures where attendance or punctuality gives cause for concern.
- To foster and develop a positive attitude amongst parents, pupils and staff to regular, punctual attendance.

### **3. Procedures**

It is essential that registration procedures be followed rigorously if the school is to monitor attendance and punctuality.

To this end the following procedures are implemented:

- Morning **register** is called promptly as close to 8.45am as possible. Any pupils not present by 8.45 a.m. are to be marked absent, (N). These children will then be contacted by admin, initially by telephone.
- By 8.45 a.m. all ARBOR registers are closed by class staff. Any pupils who arrive after 8.45am must sign in using the electronic system in the front office. Admin staff will update the registers with the late code (L) if pupils arrive after the official close of morning registers at 8.45am. After close of registration at 9.15am late arrivals will be marked as unauthorised (U) in the appropriate registers before the end of the morning session.
- Afternoon register is called at 1.15 p.m. and closed on ARBOR.
- Any pupils who leave the premises during the course of the school day, after being registered present, must be signed out via the office.

### **4. Registers**

- 4.1 Pupils are expected to attend school for the full 190 days (380 sessions) of the academic year.
- 4.2 Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons. Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are documents that may be required in a court of law, for example as

evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school. They may also contribute to pupils' end of term reports and to records of achievement. For these reasons registers are completed electronically.

- 4.3 If a child is absent, parents should contact school on the first day of absence to inform the school that he/she is unwell or has an appointment. Further contact should be made if a child is to be absent for more than one or two days. Notes should be added to ARBOR if a child is absent for more than two days.
- 4.4 For children with persistent illness absence, a request for Medical Evidence will be sent, and parents expected to show evidence of doctor's appointments or prescribed medication. Unless evidence is provided the absence will be unauthorised.
- 4.5 For children with longer term medical issues, reviews will take place with the INCo.
- 4.6 It is not acceptable for children to be kept off school for reasons other than illness/medical, or in exceptional circumstances.

## 5. First Day Contact & Procedures to address concerns

See the 'Flowcharts of Action' for an outline of procedures (**Flowcharts of Action**). As part of raising and maintaining awareness of the importance of regular school attendance the school has adopted a policy of contacting the family on the first day of a pupil's unexplained absence.

### How the system operates:

8.30am: *Doors open for a 'Soft Start'*

8.45am: *Register called*

8.45 a.m. *Register closed in ARBOR. Latecomers sign in at the Office (L).*

*Parents contact the school if pupils unwell or have a medical appointment.*

9.15am *Official Registers Close: Pupils arriving after this time are Unauthorised (U)*

*Admin updates registers on ARBOR*

9.30 a.m. *Admin contacts the family of any pupils with unexplained absence, by text or a phone call – both will be logged on ARBOR. If a family cannot be contacted the Headteacher is made aware, to decide on further action.*

- A file will be kept listing any unexplained absence telephone calls, letters and responses, (**Contact Log & Request for Medical Evidence**).
- The parent will be contacted requesting information regarding the absence.
- In addition, parents whose children who have regular days absence (e.g. regular Fridays off) will be contacted and invited into school by the class teacher. A structured conversation, with the outcome being to improve attendance will take place and parents will be reminded about the importance of pupils attending school regularly. (**Record of Contact Form**) Any relevant support will be offered and if appropriate a referral to the Family Support Worker. A follow up review meeting will be arranged.
- If attendance drops below 97% a letter is sent. (**Below 97% attendance letter**).
- Following on from 'Below 97% Attendance Letter' and if absences persist (authorised or unauthorised), parents may be invited to attend an Attendance Panel meeting, in an effort to address attendance issues.

- Wishes and feelings work will be done with the pupil before this meeting. Following on from the meeting, an Attendance Action Plan will be formed. Each case will be considered individually, and appropriate action taken, which may involve a parenting contract, TAF, or consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Weekly attendance figures are produced for each class and these are shared with pupils, with the winning class receiving a reward.
- Weekly attendance figures are shared with parents via the weekly Pupil/Parent Bulletin.
- Weekly attendance figures are shared with staff during Monday briefing, where any concerns are highlighted.
- Termly attendance figures, including SEND, EHCP and Disadvantaged groups are shared with Governors at each meeting, via the Head Teacher Report. Persistent absence is also reported on.
- A letter will be sent to parents whose children are late to school on five separate occasions (**Lateness Letter 1**). This situation will be monitored and a subsequent letter will be sent if the situation does not improve (**Lateness Letter 2**).

## 6. Family Holidays During Term Time

- 6.1 The Department for Education has made amendments to the 2006 regulations for Pupil Registration. These amendments remove all entitlement to family holidays and extended leave, as well as the previous statutory threshold of ten school days. This means that there is no authorised absence for holidays during term time. Within Weaver Trust schools 'Exceptional circumstance' is considered, this includes leave of absence when parents return from the Armed Forces. The Head Teacher will use their discretion.
- 6.2 Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued for unauthorised holidays, in line with advice from the Department for Education, when parents take their children out of school during term time.
- 6.3 The cost of the Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) is £80 per child, per parent, and must be paid within 21 days to the Local Authority. If not paid, this will double to £160 per child, per parent. If the fine has not been paid after 28 days, legal action will be taken by the Local Authority.

## 7. Lateness

- 7.1 Doors open at 8.30am and school begins promptly at 8.45 a.m. All pupils are expected to be in school for registration by this time. Gates are locked at 8.45am and any child arriving later this should enter school via the main entrance reporting to the School Office and sign themselves in the late book giving the reason for lateness. The child will then be sent to their classroom.
- 7.2 Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action will be taken, and parents will be invited to attend a panel to address lateness.
- 7.3 Measures have been put in place to target pupils for whom lateness is a concern – these include those late for collection.

## 8. Pupil Reward System

- Pupils are encouraged and expected to attend school 100% of the time, aiming to never miss a minute of learning.

- Each week, the class with the highest percentage attendance are rewarded with a prize, which is presented to them during a whole school assembly.
- Individualised incentive schemes are also used to improve attendance and punctuality for individuals and specific families for whom this is a challenge.

#### **9. What can parents do to help?**

- Read the '**Information for Parents' Booklet**', sent out in September.
- Let the school know as soon as possible why your child is away.
- Contact school when your child returns to school, if he/she is absent for more than 1 or 2 days.
- Try to make appointments outside school time.
- Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary.

#### **If you are worried about your child's attendance at school what can you do?**

- Talk to your child; it may be something simple.
- Talk to the Headteacher and staff at the school. **If it continues with no good reason:**
- The school may consider contacting Education Welfare with the regards to possible legal action.

#### **10. Review:**

This policy was drawn up following guidance. It will be reviewed annually, in line with our Policy Review Cycle, unless there are significant changes and therefore a need to review it sooner.