

Werrington Primary School Attendance Policy July 2008

1. Mission Statement

Werrington Primary School aims to provide each child with a high quality learning experience, developing their potential and encouraging independence and confidence.

We aim to promote self-esteem, respect for ourselves and each other, co-operation and care for the community.

2. Parent/Carer Responsibilities

2.1 Parents/carers have a legal duty as well as a moral obligation to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full time basis.

2.2 Parents/carers should ensure that if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason (such as sickness) they should contact the school as soon as possible and before 9.00am. on the first morning of absence. This may be done by phone, note or in person. School should then be kept informed on a day to day basis.

2.3 When a child returns to school after a period of absence a note should be brought in by the parent/carers to explain the absence. If a child has a medical appointment a note may be sent to school on the day prior to the absence, but we would ask that parents/carers make routine medical and dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible.

2.4 Parents/carers may not authorise their child's absence as only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided by the parent/carers. Werrington Primary School carries out absent coding in line with the Local Authority (LA) guidance. (Should parents/carers fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence the school will record such absence as unauthorised.) Unacceptable reasons for absence include shopping and birthdays.

2.5 Parents/carers should ensure that their child arrives at school in time for the start of the school day (8.55am.). If a child is late they should report directly to the school office.

2.6 Requests for leave should be made at least 4 school weeks in advance and will be considered on an individual basis by the Head Teacher (or in their absence by an Assistant Head and a member of the Governing Body) following the Governing Body's Attendance Committee guidance. Each application will be assessed against the criteria set by the Attendance Committee. Criteria include attendance level, impact on learning, exceptional circumstances etc. Parents/carers should not expect leave of absence to be granted automatically. Parents/carers are advised not to make any arrangements until the request for leave of absence has been considered (please see criteria - Annex A).

2.7 Leave of absence should not be requested:

- during the month prior to and week of Key Assessments (currently held during May);
- the beginning or end of a school term.

3 School Responsibilities

3.1 The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress.

3.2 Registers will be called twice daily at the start of each morning and afternoon session and will be kept open for a maximum of 30 minutes (in accordance with DfES guidelines). Any child arriving after the register has been called will be recorded as late for that session. If a child arrives after the register has closed but their parent/carer provides them with a note detailing an reason acceptable to the school, they are marked as authorised absence for that session. If they are late and fail to provide an acceptable reason they will be marked as unauthorised absence for the whole of that session.

3.3 Teachers will complete registers in accordance with the guidance they have been given. The Head Teacher will inspect registers periodically in order to ensure that they are being satisfactorily maintained and to ensure that any potential attendance difficulties are identified at an early stage.

3.4 Should a class teacher have particular concerns about an individual child's attendance or punctuality the Head Teacher should be informed. The school secretary will alert the Head Teacher if any child's attendance falls below the school average, currently 95.5%.

3.5 If a child is absent the class teacher will not enter any code in the register, leaving the office staff to select the correct code for that absence. The school attendance secretary will aim to contact by telephone, any parent who has failed to inform the school of the reason for an absence (first day calling - the primary aim being to check on the safety of the child). This phone call should be done, wherever possible, by 11.00am.

3.6 All absence notes from parents/carers should be dated and initialled by the class teacher and sent to the school office to be held on individual children's files. Only notes concerning absences about which there are concerns/queries should be brought to the attention of the Head Teacher (who may then choose to speak to the parents/carers concerned).

3.7 Where children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over 5 days, the school will, if requested, send material home so that they can keep up with school work. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period or be a repetitive absence (such as necessary stays in hospital), the school will contact the Education Welfare Officer so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given tuition outside of school.

3.8 The Head Teacher will regularly review attendance data and will use this data during meetings with the school's Attendance Officer and Governing Body. These meetings will agree on attendance thresholds and targets and will identify respective tasks and follow-up actions for both the school and attendance service.

3.9 The school will employ a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance:

- the Head Teacher and class teachers will communicate regularly with parents/carers on attendance matters;
- children who have 99% or 100% attendance in any one term will receive an Excellence Certificate for Attendance, awarded at a Whole School Assembly;

- clear attendance information will be entered in the school brochure;
- the Governing Body has agreed not to use Fixed Penalty Notices at the present time but reserve the right to review this should attendance figures drop below the attendance targets, which would have an impact on children's learning abilities.

4. Review Date

4.1 This attendance policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier if the average attendance figures fall below the historical average attendance of 95.6%.