

White Laith Primary School

Attendance Policy

Agreed by Governors: September 2021

Interim review : April 2023

Review Date: September 2024

The Attendance Policy is part of our approach to safeguarding children and is part of broader suite of Safeguarding policies including the schools Child Protection Policy.

At White Laith we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Good attendance is essential if children are to participate fully in all school activities. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by or invited to deliver services at White Laith. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

We also exercise this responsibility by educating our children so that they grow in their understanding of their rights and responsibilities to themselves and others, in safety consciousness, and, in their maturity and abilities to keep themselves and others safe.

We perceive this to be part of our role in promoting British values.

Regular attendance at school is a key indicator of performance.

Where a child misses even one lesson in a sequence, it can affect their learning.

Likewise, punctuality is also critical, to ensure children are properly prepared for learning.

Aims:

- For all children to have 0% unauthorised absence. Any absence from school should be authorised.
- Attendance levels to be at least the national average but aiming to be better than the national average. The aspiration is to have 100% attendance whenever possible.
- To maximise the attendance of every child
- To ensure children and parents/carers recognise the importance of good attendance and act accordingly.
- For all children to arrive at school on time every day.

What we ask children and parents/carers to do:

- We want all children to aim for full attendance
- Parents should ensure their children attend school unless there is an authorised reason.
- Parents should ensure children arrive at school on time.
- We expect parents to inform school if their child is absent (We can only accept explanations from parents, carers and other adult family members)

What the School will do:

- We will encourage punctuality and good attendance through incentives and rewards.
- We will do all we can to make school a safe, settled, secure place to be, and a place where children enjoy themselves
- We will record attendance accurately
- We will contact parents when a child is absent and no reason has been given
- We will offer a sympathetic response to difficulties
- We will offer help where necessary from within school and the Leeds City Council Children Services
- We will regularly remind parents of the importance of attendance

Responding to non attendance:

When a child is absent and no reason is given, the following shall apply:

Day 1

- School will make a friendly contact with parents on the first day of absence by telephone or text. This contact will usually be made by 9.30am.
- If there is no response, a second contact will be attempted. If there is no response to this second contact we may visit the home or take other action to investigate the reason for the absence.

Day 2

- If contact cannot be made or if there is any concern regarding absence, the School Business Manager may ask the Cluster Attendance On Street Team to visit the child's home to complete a welfare check, bring the child to school or confirm illness.
- Depending on the response, the absence will be categorised as either authorised or unauthorised.
- If the Cluster Attendance On Street Team is asked to visit the home address an incident should be input to CPOMS to notify the DSL.

Day 3

- If the above steps have not resulted in contact from parents or if the whereabouts of the child remains unknown the Cluster On Street Team will be asked to visit the home address for a second time.
- If the Cluster On Street Team are still unable to contact parents and are unable to confirm whereabouts of the child this would prompt a discussion with school regarding implementation of a Police 101 welfare check.
- Prior to implementation of the Police welfare check, school staff should visit the family home address.

The Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher will monitor CPOMS and advise staff if there are any specific Safeguarding / Child Protection concerns that may alter the procedures detailed above.

School attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff will follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future (Keeping Children Safe in Education and Children Missing in Education Nov 2013, updated Sept 2016).

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.

Children Missing Education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise (e.g. privately, electively home educated (EHE) or in alternative provision).

We follow the Leeds Local Authority guidelines for CME as such will make a CME referral as soon as possible, but no later than when the child has been missing from school for 20 days.

Monitoring attendance and punctuality:

Regular reviews of children with less than 92% attendance will be carried out.

If we are concerned about levels of attendance of a particular child:

- We will contact the home to express concern and offer support
- We may visit the home

If we continue to be concerned:

- We will write to the parent/carer to explain our concerns
- School will contact the parents of children where attendance is a concern. A meeting will be held with the parents to understand the nature or reason for their child's absence and agree measures in order to improve attendance moving forward.
- Any concerns will be brought to the attention of the Head Teacher.

If we are still concerned:

- We will engage the support of the Cluster Attendance Improvement Officer.

We will regularly analyse attendance and punctuality patterns so we can target areas of concern and improve attendance levels.

School attendance must at least reach the national average initially. When attendance levels are above the national average, variations in performance will continue to be addressed.

Governors also set targets for attendance and punctuality to trigger investigation and action. Because governors believe regular attendance is key for a child's success we have a named governor who has attendance as their responsibility.

We will analyse the attendance and punctuality of:

- Individuals
- Classes
- Year groups
- Gender groups
- Vulnerable groups

This will allow us to identify specific groups for whom special attention is needed and to target resources.

The headteacher will report to governors termly on attendance patterns and progress.

Rewards:

Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded. Rewards may include: class certificates, individual certificates, stickers and prizes

Attendance will be reviewed each term as part of our Assertive Mentoring system and children will be rewarded with Green grades if attendance is above 96%

Maintaining a high profile:

- A display board will be maintained with information about attendance and support for parents.
- References will be made to progress in newsletters.

Sickness:

- We expect that children become ill from time to time and illness is classed as authorised absence. We are also aware that from time to time a 'sickness bug' can quickly spread across classes.
- Patterns of illness will be monitored in line with usual termly monitoring. Where any child exhibits high levels of illness (equivalent to 10 sessions or 5 days a year) we request that medical evidence can be provided in the form of an appointment card or prescribed medication for any medical absence to be approved
- If there are already concerns about levels of absence (<92% / 10 sessions missed) and appropriate evidence is not provided sickness absence will not be authorised.

Leave of absence:

- Parents/Carers do not have a legal right or entitlement to take their children out of school during term time.
- Parents must fill in a leave of absence form, requesting leave of absence, at least two weeks before the absence. This can be requested from the school office.
- In exceptional circumstances leave of absence may be granted by the Head Teacher during term time e.g. family funeral, family wedding, religious observance (this list is not exhaustive). Supporting evidence for such events would be required in order for absence to be authorised.
- **The Head Teacher cannot authorise any leave of absence for holiday during term time.**

- Where leave of absence for a holiday is taken and there are concerns about levels of attendance, school is obliged to pass on information to the Leeds City Council Children's Services (Attendance) who may issue a Penalty fine.

Punctuality:

When a child arrives between 9.00 a.m. and 9.30 a.m. they will be recorded as *late*. This is recorded as 'L' on the official register print out.

When a child arrives after 9.30 a.m. they will be recorded as *absent late*. This will be recorded as 'u' on the official register print out and is counted as an absence.

Roles and responsibilities:

Class Teacher:

The class teacher will complete the Class Register each day between 8.50 a.m. and 9.00 a.m. and at the start of afternoon lessons (times differ between classes due to staggered lunches).

Notes about children will be placed in the register. If a parent verbally informs the teacher that a child will be absent on a particular day, the teacher will make a note for the register. If a child is late, the teacher will ensure s/he has been to the office to ensure s/he has been added to the register.

Office Staff:

The School Business Manager will implement the non-attendance procedures as detailed above.

Office staff will administer the Scholarpack attendance database. They will ensure teachers are informed when children are absent. They will ensure children who are late are recorded in the register and that where children leave before the end of a session (e.g. for medicals or illness), it is recorded.

Liaison with Secondary School:

At transition time we will make direct contact and provide information to the receiving high school where we have concerns about the attendance of a child.

Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher:

The HT will monitor attendance and authorise attendance where appropriate. The headteacher will report to governors at each full governing body meeting.

The Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher will monitor CPOMS and advise staff if there are any specific Safeguarding / Child Protection concerns that may alter the procedures detailed above regarding non-attendance.

Governors:

Governors will monitor attendance each term. They will set specific targets as necessary. They will evaluate the actions taken by the school to improve attendance.