



# Wick CE Primary School

## ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

### Rationale

Wick Church of England Primary School primary is a lively Christian School which strives to enable all children to realise their full potential, gain an understanding of their worth as Children of God and live happy and purposeful lives.

The key to fostering good attendance and punctuality lies in creating a school environment that students genuinely enjoy being in. Therefore, we believe the fundamental basis for ensuring high attendance is to establish a calm, well-organised, safe, and supportive atmosphere where all students are eager and prepared to engage in learning. Every child of mandatory school age is granted the right to receive a proficient, full-time education tailored to their age, abilities, and any special educational requirements they may possess. We support the view that, daily attendance and punctuality has a positive impact on educational progress. This policy will support us, in conjunction with parents and careers, to provide the best possible education for the children.

For a pupil to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. The below table highlights how attendance and punctuality are linked to a pupil's attainment.

<b>Green Group</b> 97% -100% Attendance	<b>Lowest Risk: Best Chance of Academic Success</b> A student who has 97% attendance has still missed 5 days of education across an academic year.
<b>Yellow Group</b> 95% - 97% Attendance	<b>Risk of Underachievement</b> 95% means a student misses 8 days of education across an academic year.
<b>Amber Group</b> 93% - 95% Attendance	<b>Serious Risk of Underachievement</b> 93% means a student misses 13 days of education across an academic year.
<b>Pink Group</b> 90%- 93% Attendance	<b>Severe Risk of Underachievement</b> 90% means a student is missing 18 days of education across an academic year.
<b>Red Group</b> Below 90% Attendance and below	<b>Extreme Concern of Underachievement</b> 80% attendance is the equivalent of missing one year out of 5 years of education or 39 days of education across an academic year.

### Aims

At Wick CE Primary School, we aspire to:

- Foster a culture of excellent attendance and discourage lateness.
- Monitor absence patterns and implement measures for improvement when necessary.
- Identify instances of unauthorised absence and respond accordingly.
- Distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absences effectively.

To successfully achieve our aims, we will strive to:

- Maintain unauthorised absence at a level below national and local authority averages.
- Ensure accurate and prompt completion of all registers using the appropriate codes.
- Inform parents/carers about their responsibilities for attendance and punctuality, involving them in discussions when concerns arise through the school attendance process.

For the purpose of this policy, definitions of terms used are available for reference in Appendix 1.



## Registers

Our responsibility is to support attendance and examine problems that may lead to non-attendance. To do this we keep a register of attendance at the start of every morning and afternoon session. These registers are legal documents and must be kept for three years after the date on which they were last used. Care must be taken to record information accurately. Our registers open at 08:50 and close at 09:20.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Wick CE Primary School, accepts the role and responsibilities, as outlined below, in partnership with parents and carers.

### Executive Headteacher/Head of School

The Headteacher holds the responsibility of ensuring the school adheres to all statutory obligations, including maintaining accurate registers and submitting required data promptly. Additionally, they are tasked with implementing effective monitoring, support, and intervention strategies for students whose attendance or punctuality raises concerns. Only the Headteacher has the authority to authorise absences and approve requests in exceptional circumstances, particularly for students with a demonstrated history of excellent attendance.

### Governors

The governing body is tasked with setting and overseeing the school's attendance target while also regularly monitoring the attendance data. This responsibility involves participating actively in enhancing attendance rates, advocating for the prioritisation of attendance within their schools, and collaborating with leaders to establish a positive school-wide ethos as well as ensuring that leaders fulfil their statutory duties.

### Staff

The school, rather than the parent or carer, is responsible for categorising each half-day of absence as either authorised or unauthorised, hence the necessity for providing a reason for the absence. All teaching staff are required to complete the electronic register on SIMS at the beginning of both morning and afternoon sessions. The school exclusively holds the authority to authorise absences and will employ the DfE absence codes for coding each instance. Authorised absences typically encompass reasons such as sickness, unavoidable medical/dental appointments, religious observance, or exceptional family circumstances like bereavement. Authorisation will not be granted for absences related to activities such as shopping trips, birthdays, airport visits, family reunions, buying shoes, getting a haircut, or instances of parent, sibling, or family weddings.

### Parents and carers

It is the legal duty of each parent to ensure that their child obtains an education, either through regular attendance at a school or through alternative educational methods. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents or carers may be reported to the Local Authority if their child(ren)'s absence from school is a significant cause for concern which could also lead to a school attendance meeting following the Education Act 1996. The following headings outline the expectations we have of our parents.

#### **Beginning and end of school day**

Parents or carers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that their child arrives punctually at 8.40am to school, ready to enter the classroom and start lessons at 8.50am. This is the latest time we would expect a child to arrive for registration. If punctuality problems are of a persistent nature, parents or carers are encouraged to work in partnership with the school to improve the situation.

The school accepts responsibility for the supervision of pupils on its premises from 8.40am when the school gates are unlocked and a member of staff will be on duty in the school playground. Parents are regularly reminded that children should not arrive in school before 8.40 am, unless attending Breakfast Club. Pupils attending breakfast club will be escorted to the classroom at 8.40am.



Parents will be able to enter the school playground from 3.00pm, when the school gates will be unlocked, and pupils are dismissed at 3.15pm. If pupils are taking part in after-school activities, written information will indicate when supervision of pupils will end.

### **Reporting an absence**

As part of our commitment to ensuring the safety of all children, we implement a daily call system. When your child is ill, we expect parents to contact the school as soon as possible with a detailed explanation for their absence and only on the school's acceptance of the explanation will the absence be authorised.

Wick CE Primary School will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, we reserve the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness or it is needed for specifics of a medical plan, an education healthcare plan, or it has been requested by a body such as the EWO.

For every day your child is off, a phone call is expected. If the school office has not received a reason for absence by 8:50 am, a call or text message will be sent to the parent or carer. In cases where attempts to contact parents or carers to establish the reason for absence prove unsuccessful, a letter specifying the date of the unauthorised absence may be sent home. Additionally, if a student is absent from school for more than three consecutive days without any explanation, a member of the school attendance team or the education welfare officer may conduct a home visit and reach out to the Local Authority. This proactive approach aims to address unexplained or prolonged absences, promoting a collaborative effort to support the well-being and attendance of students.

### **Medical Appointments**

We monitor the amount of time missed due to medical appointments carefully. We acknowledge that hospital and specialist clinic appointments, including orthodontic and on-going dental treatment may require a student having time out of school. Our expectation is that the minimum amount of learning is lost. For this reason, we seek an explanation from parents where a whole day is missed and proof of unavoidable medical appointments in school time must be provided for the school. Routine, non-urgent appointments must be made after school time and during the 13 weeks of school holidays.

### **Requests for Absence during Term Time**

Parents cannot authorise absence; only schools can do this. Similarly, the head teacher may not grant leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. We request that parents contact the school in writing at least two week prior to the proposed start date and submit, where possible, confirmed booking information.

Where the absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions

### **Holidays and Penalty Notices**

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance and therefore our policy will class these as an unauthorised absence. Any requests for holidays must be placed in writing at least four weeks in advance and must be accompanied by a copy of the booking form for the holiday. No holidays will be authorised except in special circumstances. These are crucial times for children socially as well as academically.



If your child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-week period, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice. There are two sessions in each school day (morning and afternoon). The sessions of absence do not need to be consecutive across the 10 school weeks.

Advance dates of school terms are always published on the South Gloucestershire and School website including the additional training days - once they have been agreed. It is important that parents and carers only book holidays during these stated holiday periods.

See appendix two for more detailed information regarding this process.

### Monitoring

The foundation of good attendance begins with fostering close and constructive relationships between parents and students and treating them with respect. Attendance data will be monitored, twice a term, by the senior leader with overall responsibility for attendance. Addressing the root causes of persistence absence and eliminating barriers to attendance, whether at home, in school, or more broadly, involves schools and local partners working collaboratively and in partnership with families, not in opposition. Therefore, our monitoring system will embed the following format:

**Expect:** aspiration to high standards from all pupils.

**Monitor:** rigorously using the data to identify patterns and poor attendance as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them.

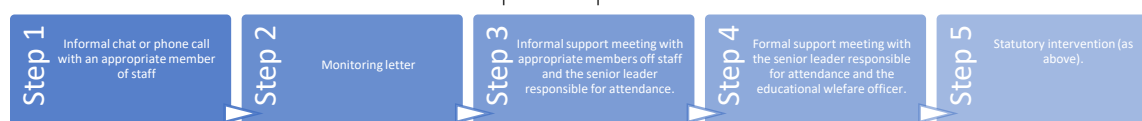
**Listen and Understand:** discussions with pupils and parents to listen and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

**Facilitate Support:** working with pupils and parent to remove and overcome barriers inside and outside of school, helping to access the support they need.

**Formalise Support:** where poor attendance persists partners to work together to explain the consequences and ensure support is in place to enable families to respond.

**Enforce:** where all avenues have been exhausted, support is not working or not being engage with the use of statutory intervention will be used (penalty notices in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education).

This flow chart shows how this format will be put into practice.



For this to be effective, early intervention is key and support will be put in place as early as possible working with pupils and parents in a timely manner. Meetings will be used to provide a useful opportunity to review the reasons for absence and lateness and agree actions that will support the parent and carer in making the necessary improvements. These plans set specific targets for attendance and may include the school requesting evidence in support of a child's high level of absence, such as, copies of prescriptions, appointment cards as well as parents or carers providing written permission for the school to contact professionals in the Health service by signing a medical consent form. The school may decide to not authorise any absences unless proof of illness or medical consent is provided. A referral to the school's LA officer may be made at this stage.

When at the point of statutory intervention, a school attendance panel will be used. This is a more formal meeting which sets out the parent's or carer's responsibilities in ensuring daily attendance to avoid the possibility of legal action. This is the first stage of formal legal proceedings for unsatisfactory attendance at school. We always encourage parents or carers to work in partnership with the school at all times and not to collude with their child's absence from school. If a child is experiencing problems attending, it is much better for the school to know straightaway so that we can offer our support to you and them. The LA also work in partnership with parents but do have the power to issue Fixed Penalty notices as well as prosecute parents or carers in the Magistrate court for failure to ensure their child's daily attendance at school. In other circumstances, they may also apply for an Education Supervision order, Parenting order, fines and prosecution on the child which could also impact the parents or carers criminal record.



## Monitoring and Review

This policy is a working policy and will be subject to regular review in practice. The school will periodically review the process to ensure that it continues to work effectively.

Written by: Beth Stephens

Date: 11/03/24

Approved by: FGB Committee

Date:

Reviewed by: FGB Committee

Date:

Next review: July

Signed..... Date .....

Chair of Full Governing Body



## Appendix 1

### Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

#### **Absence:**

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

#### **Authorised absence:**

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency
- the pupil is the child of Traveller parents and are subject to specific special circumstances linked to this, which have been discussed with the school
- there is a family bereavement
- the pupil is attending an interview for a place at another school
- the pupil is participating in an approved public performance
- circumstances when the school is declared closed

Pupils away from school for the following reasons can be regarded as present for statistical purposes.

- The pupil is attending an approved off-site Educational activity or is receiving special off-site tuition,
- The pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit.

#### **Unauthorised absence:**

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed school hours are 8.45 to 3.15 (KS1 / EYFS) and 8.40 to 3.10 (KS2)
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the pupil is shopping during school hours
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (e.g., a birthday)
- the pupil is visiting relatives
- the pupil is away from school due to a parent or sibling illness
- the pupil is away from school on a family holiday

#### **Persistent absence (PA):**

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

#### **Missing (in) education**

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school.

## Appendix 2

### Fixed Penalty Fines

A fine will be considered when, a child has reached the threshold of 10 sessions (where a session is half a day) for unauthorised reasons. This period can span across terms and years on a 10-week rolling cycle.

Previously, the threshold was **more** than 10 sessions in a 6-week rolling cycle.

The fine is issued per parent per child.

#### 1st Occurance

- £80, per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days
- £160, per parent, per child if paid within 28 days
- Failure to pay may result in prosecution
- Eg 2 parents and 1 child would incur a £160 fine if paid within 21 days or £320 if paid within 28 days

#### 2nd Occurance

- Within 3 years of the first occurrence
- £160, Per parent, per child if paid within 28 days
- No early payment reduction
- Failure to pay may result in prosecution
- Eg 2 parents and 1 child would incur £320 if paid within 28 days

#### 3rd Occurance

- Within 3 years of the first occurrence
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent(s) for the same child, therefore may result in prosecution under the single justice procedure
- If guilty of: 'Failure to secure their child's regular attendance at a school' a fine of up to £1000 can be imposed and you will have a criminal record