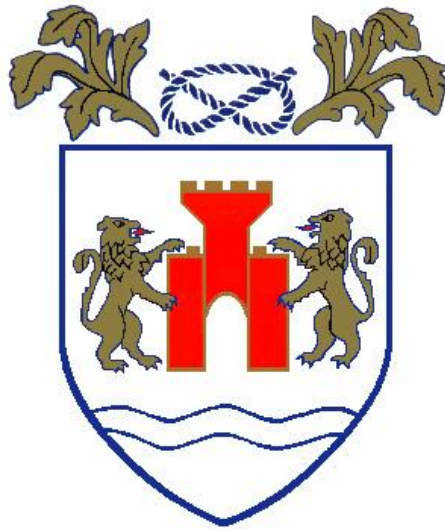


Wolstanton High School

A Shaw Education Trust Academy



Attendance Policy

Agreed by Academy Council: March 2016

Next Review: March 2017

Overview:

Attendance is a key issue in education. The Education Act 1996 states: 'If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered child at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his or her parent is guilty of an offence.'

Here at Wolstanton High School, we work closely with a variety of support services, including the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service and Local Support Teams, to ensure that we maintain good standards of child attendance.

There are already strong links in existence between school staff, parents and the EWS and we are confident that many of the procedures outlined within this document will not apply to the majority of the families who work so closely with us in order to ensure the regular attendance of their children.

Information about school targets

Staffordshire LEA has set the attendance target for Wolstanton High School at 95%.

Wolstanton High School's attendance for 2014/15 was 94.77%.

Responsibilities

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for attendance at the school. The school's attendance system is overseen by Mr J Johnson: Assistant Headteacher). The school Attendance Officer, Mrs L Downs, is responsible for the day to day running of the school's attendance system. Form Tutors have a responsibility to complete attendance registers accurately and on time, and to regularly inform their tutor group as to their attendance

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Some interesting information about absence:

Examination of national data from 2005 shows a strong link between average absence levels in schools and a child's attainment:

- 90% of children gain five or more good GCSE grades at schools with an average absence of 7.5 days or less per child
- Only 31.3% of children gain five or more good GCSE grades at schools with an average absence of more than 20 days per child

Research shows that young people who are absent from school without permission are **most vulnerable** to being drawn into crime and anti-social behaviour and **more likely to be unemployed** after leaving school.

- A recent Youth Crime Survey showed that 45% of young people in mainstream education who have committed an offence say they have been absent from school without their school's approval
- The survey also showed that 62% of 10-16 year olds who have committed criminal or anti-social behaviour have also had periods of unauthorised absence

Obviously, children who do not attend school regularly are **less likely to achieve** their target levels and/or GCSE grades.

Did you know?

90% attendance might sound impressive, but actually ...

- If a child has 90% attendance over a school year, this means that 4 whole weeks' worth of lessons have been missed
- If 90% attendance is maintained over 5 years, half a school year will have been missed overall
- Research suggests that 17 missed school days in a year = 1 GCSE grade DROP in achievement

Guidance on the reporting of child absence from school:

Parents/Carers

If a child is going to be absent, please contact the school by telephone (**Child Absence Line – 01782 742902**) or access Insight and submit an absence form on the first day of absence. Please endeavour to do this before 9.30am where possible. Parents/carers should advise us at this point as to the reasons for absence and also how long they expect the child to be absent from school. If this is unclear, keep in regular contact with us to update us on the situation.

If the child is expected to be absent from school for a period of more than a week, parents/carers should contact school to arrange for work to be sent home (if the child is physically well enough).

If a child needs to leave school in order to attend an appointment, they should bring an explanatory note from a parent/carer (in advance of the appointment if possible) which should then be signed by a member of the child's form tutor.

PLEASE NOTE – medical appointments should be scheduled outside school hours wherever possible and if the appointment must take place during the school day, the child should return to school if this is appropriate.

If a child attends a morning medical appointment and is late to school as a result, the child should sign in at the main office or pupil reception. If a note is not provided by the parent as an explanation of the child's lateness, the child will receive a late mark on the attendance register.

School

Wherever possible, all parents/carers of absent children will be contacted by telephone or text message by Mrs Downs, our Attendance Officer, on the first day of absence, if we have not already been contacted by the parent/carer of the child. This procedure helps to detect cases of truancy, thus ensuring the health and safety of our children. Our attendance consultants, Attend EDC, may visit home if we have not received a reason for absence or if your child has low attendance.

Form Tutors will collect explanatory notes and report absences to pupil reception as necessary.

Mrs Downs will collect notes in advance of appointments if parents/carers wish to send them in – absences can be recorded on the system prior to them taking place.

Absence and attendance procedures – school

General

- A printout of **unexplained** absences is given to the Heads of House (HoH) weekly to read and check. Form Tutors are also asked to check reasons for absence.
- A printout of all children whose attendance is under 95% is given to the HoH weekly and, through liaison with Mrs Downs, letters will be sent half-termly to inform parents that their child's attendance is below this figure. Obviously, if the attendance figure has risen above 95% since a period of absence, a letter may not be sent out to parents/carers.
- Punctuality can effect attendance and if a child has signed in late to school on a regular basis in a half-term without reasonable explanation, a letter will be sent informing parents/carers of this and a meeting will be requested if deemed necessary, should this issue continue
- At least one weekly meeting is held between Mrs Downs, the HoH and Lesley Hogg (Attend EDC) in order to discuss issues with attendance. Mr Johnson (Assistant Head) also meets with the EWW and Mrs Downs on a regular basis.
- If we are unable to contact a parent/carer for an explanation regarding a period of absence, we can request that a home visit from our Attendance Consultant or EWW takes place – **please ensure that all contact numbers are updated with school.**
- Parents/carers may contact the school at any time and ask for their child's attendance figure and/or lateness figure or access this through Insight.
- A penalty notice may be issued if an excluded child is in a public place at any time during school hours in the first five days of the exclusion.

Punctuality

- If a child arrives late during morning registration they should go straight to their form room and ask their Form Tutor to mark them in the register. They should NOT sign in at the office
- Lateness after the end of registration is recorded as U on the register and can count against a child's attendance. If a child is late to school on a regular basis parents/carers are informed and detentions issued. Parents whose child is repeatedly late (after 8.55am) will receive a Penalty Notice if their child is late over twenty times over the current and previous term.
- Compulsory online registration (PARS) occurs at 8.30am and at 2.50pm.

Education Welfare and types of absence

Our Education Welfare Officer visits, at least weekly, to discuss attendance matters. Education Welfare Officers are primarily present to offer support to parents/carers who are struggling with regular attendance for their child. However, the Education Welfare Service are also responsible for helping schools to ensure that their levels of unauthorised absence remain at an acceptable percentage.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE can **usually** be applied to the following:

- Genuine illness
- Unavoidable appointments which must be attended during school hours (usually applicable to hospital visits)
- Compassionate circumstances (bereavement, for example)

The list is not comprehensive and parents/carers should consult the school if unsure.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES are those which the school **does not consider reasonable**. These could include:

- parents keeping children off school for no genuine reason
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained by parents
- absences due to hair appointments, shopping trips, preparing for holidays, etc
- any leave of absence (such as a holiday) not applied for using the appropriate system. Requests for holidays during term time should be made via Mrs Downs. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 states that Head teacher's no longer have authority to grant leave of absence during term time, unless in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances for leave of absence will be considered by Mrs Thomas on an individual basis. If a request for leave of absence is declined the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued or you may be prosecuted under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996. The penalty notice fine would be £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days rising to £120 per parent, per child if paid between 21-28 days. There is no limit on the amount of times a penalty notice can be used in an academic year so more than one Penalty Notice could be issued for repeated absence without permission during term time. A combined total of ten sessions (not necessarily grouped as five consecutive days) could trigger a Penalty Notice. This will now be monitored across the previous three terms, regardless of the academic year.

Again, this list is not comprehensive and parents/carers should consult the school if unsure.

Referral to the Education Welfare Service

Child absent for no genuine reason

Where no satisfactory explanation is provided for an absence, our Education Welfare Officer will be informed and the matter will be discussed. If deemed necessary, parents/carers will be contacted and perhaps invited into school. We also carry out attendance clinics with pupils and representatives of the Education Welfare Service.

If unexplained absences continue and attendance falls under 95%, parents will be invited into school to discuss these absences. If parents/carers are invited on two occasions and they fail to communicate with school and/or attend, a home visit and further action will be pursued.

If a child is refusing to attend and/or a parent/carer is having difficulty in getting the child to school, please contact us and we will work together to try to resolve the situation.

The EWS will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed. The EWW can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

The EWS will try wherever possible to support parents/carers and parents/carers should feel that they can contact the service directly if needs be. The contact number for the EWS is **01782 296290** The EWS are independent of school and will give impartial advice.

Truancy

Most truancy is detected using the first day absence system of phone calls to parents. However, should this not be detected on the day this occurs, when it is detected an unauthorised absence will be recorded and our Education Welfare Officer will be informed. In school, a decision may be taken to place the child on an attendance report to monitor their attendance over a set period. A referral to the Local Support Team could be made and further action could be taken by the school.

Absence Codes – Reference guide

The following codes may be useful to you as parents if we do send you a copy of your child's registration certificate for you to verify or when accessing Insight:

NB: Each day is divided into two sessions (am and pm) so two marks are recorded for each day (one for the morning and one for the afternoon). Different codes are used on Insight for the PARS lesson registration system. These are explained on Insight.

Code	Description	Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site	Approved educational activity (absent)
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised absence (absent)
D	Dual registration	Approved educational activity (absent)
E	Excluded	Authorised absence (absent)
F	Extended leave of absence (agreed)	Authorised absence (absent)
G	Extended leave of absence (not agreed)	Unauthorised absence (absent)
H	Leave of absence (agreed)	Authorised absence (absent)
I	Illness	Authorised absence (absent)
J	Interview	Approved educational activity (absent)
K	Present in school but elsewhere (exams, in sick room, etc)	Present
L	Late (before register closes)	Present
M	Medical/dental appointments	Authorised absence (absent)
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence (absent)
O	Unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence (absent)
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity (absent)
Q	Lesson cancelled (particularly applies to sixth form students)	Authorised absence (absent)
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence (absent)
S	Study leave (particularly applies to sixth form students)	Authorised absence (absent)
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence (absent)
U	Late (after register closed)	Unauthorised absence (absent)
V	Educational visit or trip	Authorised absence (absent)
W	Work experience	Authorised absence (absent)
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Attendance not required (absent)
Y	Enforced school closure	Attendance not required
Z	Child not on roll	Attendance not required
-	All should attend/no mark recorded	No mark
#	School closed to children and staff	Attendance not required

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.