

Carddyke Federation



Walcott Primary School Policy for School Attendance

Agreed: June 2021

Signed: Andrew Sewell Headteacher

Signed: Rev Steve Chair of Governors

Review: June 2023

Aim

We aim to ensure that our students benefit fully from the education we seek to provide by maximising the attendance of each student.

As a community school we aim to take a fair, balanced and ethical view in the decisions we make regarding attendance and absences. Our mission statement, '**Working together success for all**', which extends to all pupils, families and staff. When making judgements about requests for term time absence the head teacher and governing body have discretion in determining what is an exceptional circumstance. We will aim to use both the guidance set out below but also our knowledge of individual circumstances.

Partnership Between Parents and School

'Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance. Parents should ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn.'

(Department For Education (DFE) 1994).

it is expected that students will:

- Come to school in full school uniform and properly equipped for lessons.
- Not arrive at school before 8.40am Walcott
- Be well rested after a good night's sleep.
- Be fit and well when they come to school.

Reporting Absences

'It is parents' responsibility to inform schools of the reason for a child's absence parental contact on the first day of absence should be the normal expectation. Where a child is ill the school should be notified of the nature of the illness and, where this can be predicted, the date the child is expected to be able to resume his or her studies'. (DFE 1994)

We request parents to:

Telephone prior to the start of school on the first day on which they expect their child to be absent and to supply information about the absence as appropriate if this is not possible ask that parental contact is made as soon as is practicable. Inform the school in advance if they wish the school to authorise leave for their child to attend medical or dental appointments. Always provide an absence note upon their child's return to school.

Unauthorised Absence

'Where a student is absent without prior notice an explanation is required. If one is not forthcoming the absence must be treated as unauthorised and the register annotated accordingly; schools are not obliged to accept parental notes where there is reason to doubt the validity of the explanation offered; explanations such as minding the house, looking after other children or shopping trips within school hours will not be acceptable reasons for absence'. (DFE 1994)

All absences and the reasons for them are recorded.

An attendance register is taken at the beginning of each morning and each afternoon session using a code to identify type of absence.

Parents are notified by the school if lateness becomes a cause for concern and the Education Welfare Officer may be informed. Parents are notified if the reason offered for absence is unacceptable, eg 'We went to Alton Towers on her father's day off, DFE

refers to this type of explanation as ***'parentally condoned unjustified absence'***.

This will be

recorded as an unauthorised absence. Particular attention should be paid to the following:

Reminding parents of registered students of compulsory school age that they are under a legal duty to send their children to school regularly, and risk prosecution if they fail in this duty'. (DFE 1994)

We ask the school's Education Welfare Officer, to visit the parents of any student whose absence or lateness causes concern and to advise parents and offer support as appropriate.

Holidays and Special Circumstances

Term time holiday will not be authorised. Application for other term time leave for exceptional circumstances will be considered on individual basis.

Examples of special circumstances would be:

Attending weddings and funerals and other similar exceptional events

Hospital stays and extended medical treatment.

These absences are expected to be for **the minimum length of time.**

It is expected that family holidays will not be take place during term time.

Parents are informed of school holiday dates well in advance to aid their planning.

Term time leave **must be applied for in advance using the school term time leave application form.** Parents that take unauthorised term time leave may be subject to a fixed penalty fine. Term time leave includes non emergency doctors, hospital or dental appointments.

Blanket Warnings

The schools may decide to issue blanket term time absence warnings to all families so that late notifications cannot be used to avoid fines. This is to avoid unfairness to families who are honest about their intentions. Blanket warnings will use wording supplied by LCC and be issued at the start of the autumn term or at the point of mid-year admission.

Late Arrivals

Children arriving at school once the registers have closed will be marked as late. Late arrivals are considered in the same way as absences and persistent late arrivals that take a child's absence rate beyond 15% in any six week period may be considered for a fine.

Penalty Notice

Penalty Notices will be administered by the attendance team at the local authority. These are currently £60 per parent per child. Penalty notices will be considered when the **unauthorised absence exceeds 15% in a six week period** or when parents ignore advice from the school, that term time leave applied for will be unauthorised.

The penalty notice will rise to £120 if not paid within 21 days. The parents must pay the fine directly to the local authority. Parents can be prosecuted if they fail to pay the fine within 28 days.

Pupils with lower than average attendance will be contacted by the Headteacher and made aware of their child's absence rate and give a target of improvement by a given date.

Persistent absences and continued poor attendance following a written warning may result in the school commissioning intervention work by the Education Welfare Officer. If this fails to improve attendance, then the school may seek to issue a Penalty Warning Notice for unauthorised term time absence.

There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice

Informing Parents/ Incentives

General class based attendance rates will be published regularly in the newsletter and displayed around the school for parents to see. Parents will receive termly letters using a traffic light system to draw their attention to their child's attendance record. The school may from time to time use incentives to promote improved attendance, but these will be fairly applied to all pupils.