

# WILTON AND BARFORD CE VC PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

## As a school we aim to:

- Maintain an attendance rate of a *minimum* of 96.5%
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance.

## Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school

## As a parent you can help us by:

- Ringing on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when the child will return
- Arranging dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school breaks
- Sending in a note explaining the reason for absence on your child's return to school after an illness
- Keeping us updated by telephone or letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness

## We shall:

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls and letters through First Day Contact procedures. We have a duty to ensure that all children are safe. Where we cannot contact a parent the Education Welfare Office will be contacted who may advise reporting an unexplained absence to the police.
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, the school brochure and the Home-School agreement
- Work with, and support parents, to improve their child's attendance through the Family Link Partner
- Publish our attendance rate weekly in the school newsletter.
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance
- Publish your child's attendance rate on her/his annual school report
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance
- If we continue to have concerns make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer, who visits the school regularly to review and support attendance matters,

## Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". For example: if a child is ill, family bereavement, religious observance. We realise that there are *rare* occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically.

## Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are *not* permitted by law. These are known as "unauthorised absences". Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting on a delivery
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Going for a family day out
- Because it is your child's birthday
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Unapproved Holidays
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.

- **Unauthorised Absences have to be reported to the Local Authority.** The Education Welfare Officer may contact you and consider taking legal action against you if your child has unauthorised absences.

### Punctuality

- Morning registration is at 8:50am. This is the time your child must be in the classroom, so you need to ensure your child is coming through the school gate by 8:45
- It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day.
- If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. We take the view there are no late children, only late parents.
- In line with the DfES Guidance arrival after the close of registration is marked as unauthorised absence. **10 late session in 6 months will incur a Penalty Notice fine.**
- We will let you know if we have concerns about your child's punctuality.
- Children who remain uncollected at the end of school time will be referred to a place of safety if not collected or the school contacted by school closing time.

### Term Time Unauthorised Leave of Absence (Previously known as holiday in term time)

We are always concerned about the amount of school time pupils miss as a result of family holidays. There is no entitlement to time off in term time. Leave of absence is only allowed in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the head teacher in accordance with the school policy following guidance from the Education Act 1996 and as agreed by the governors.

It is our policy:

- That only in exceptional circumstances will leave of absence be allowed and then only up to a maximum of five days. (The cheaper cost of holidays in term time is not an acceptable reason for an application)
- Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence for term-time holidays need to fill in an application form well in advance and **before booking**. Please ask the school office for a form; the head teacher will consider your request and advise you of her decision, (possibly asking to meet with you to discuss). Further time than allowed will be unauthorised and you risk *your* child being taken off the school roll.
- Leave of absence will only be authorised (even in exceptional cases) where a child has 97% attendance **at the time of the leave**.
- If the school does not agree and you take your child on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised.
- Please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A *good* understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom
- Penalty notices will be issued for unauthorised absence taken during term time when a pupil has missed 10 sessions during the previous 6 months. **One session is a morning or afternoon.**
- Payment of £120 is required within 28 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, this sum is reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid in full within 28 days the LA is required to commence proceedings in the Magistrates' Court for the original offence of your child's poor school attendance. If you plead guilty or are found guilty the Courts have a wider range of options which could include a maximum fine of £1000. In addition a Parenting Order could be imposed.

### Leavers

If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6 to go to High School, parents are asked to

- Give the school full information about their plans including date of move, new address or at least the town you will be moving to, new school and start date when known, and reasons for moving.

- Take our school's compliments slip so the new school can easily contact us and records be transferred
- Let us know when you move

### **Children Missing Education**

When pupils leave and you have not given us the above information, and cannot contact you, then your child is considered to be a **Child Missing Education**. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services (formerly Social Services) the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate your child.

By giving us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

### **Legal Note**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills and the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if unauthorised absences continue.

We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards.

### **CHILD PROTECTION STATEMENT**

At Wilton and Barford Primary School, we believe that every child has the right to be safe and therefore to be cared for in a way that ensures her/his safety and meets her/his individual needs. We recognise that all children need protection at all times from anything or anyone that may cause them harm and work together following the Child Protection Policy to ensure this. We respect all members of the school's community and treat information with confidentiality.