



Attendance Policy

September 2020

Aims

Walnut Tree Walk Primary School is committed to providing a full and beneficial educational experience to all its pupils. If this commitment is to succeed, good pupil attendance is imperative. The School will do all it can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils and reduce absence, including persistent absence. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed speedily. Parents have a vital role to play in ensuring that pupils attend school regularly and on time. Individual parents will be contacted immediately if concerns arise over their child's attendance or punctuality with a view to resolving any problems that may have arisen. The School will seek advice from the Education Welfare Service should queries arise around pupil attendance.

Registration:

At Walnut Tree Walk Primary School an electronic registration system is used. The school will complete accurate registers at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session within 10 minutes of the start of the lesson. Children are expected to be lined up when the whistle blows at 8:55am so that morning registration can take place at 9.00am, and 1.30pm for the afternoon session.

***Covid Update: The school has temporary staggered start and end of day times which have been communicated to parents. It is important that all children arrive and are collected at their given times in order for them not to miss any of their learning time and to ensure that all children can safely enter and the leave the school premises without mixing between bubbles.**

If a pupil arrives after the commencement of the registration period, they will report to reception and the parent must sign them in using the electronic sign in system. A member of staff will then escort them to class.

***Covid Update: Any children who are late to school must be brought to the Fitzalan Street gate and the office contacted via the intercom. A member of staff will then escort the child to class.**

Pupils arriving after the register has closed, without an acceptable reason, will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for that session.

School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority. At Walnut Tree Walk Primary School, 95% and above is considered good attendance, and attendance below 90% is unsatisfactory and classed as persistent absence.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the

afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes (see Appendix 1, Attendance Codes).

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

The register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording pupils attendance or absence and in the latter case if authorised or unauthorised. A certified extract of the register can be used as evidence in legal proceedings against parents for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance or in seeking an Education Supervision Order in respect of a pupil. Registers must be kept for a minimum of 3 years following completion at the end of the academic school year.

Reporting to parents/carers

Every child's attendance is reported to parents and carers as part of their end of year report in July. Additionally, parents and carers of children with attendance levels that are unsatisfactory will be reported to more frequently through letters and meetings.

Procedures for following up absence/lateness

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the school in the morning of every day of the child's absence. If this contact is not made, then the school will contact the parent/carer by telephone or via the school's internal parental mail system, which parents can access both online and on their mobile phones. The school requires that two additional emergency contact details (so three in total) are provided for every pupil, and if we do not get a response from the parent, the other contacts will be contacted. If this does not elicit an explanation of the absence and the absence continues, further correspondence will be made, which could include a home visit or a referral to Social Care.

If there is a continual issue with absence, a letter will be sent to the parent/carer. This letter will include the statistical information pertaining to how much learning time the child has missed in the classroom. Parent/carers will be invited to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from regularly attending school. A monthly review process will then begin with an aim towards noticeably improving the child's attendance.

If there is no sign of improvement upon this review, the School's Education Welfare Officer will be informed and the parent/carer will be invited in to the school for a meeting by the Headteacher. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance.

Should there be no improvement in attendance following a panel meeting or should there be non-attendance of a panel meeting, the next step could be to initiate court proceedings or implement a fixed penalty notice.

Where a pupil is persistently late the parent/carer will be invited to a school based meeting.

At Walnut Tree Walk, we want to work with families to improve all pupil's attendance. Attendance data for every child is looked at fortnightly. However if there is no improvement in the attendance of children with persistent absence, then please see the table below explaining the actions the school will take:

% Attendance	School Action
Less than 90% attendance	A letter is sent home with your child's % attendance, offering a meeting and support/dialogue around improving attendance. From this point on attendance is closely monitored.
85%-90% attendance	A second letter is sent home requiring a meeting to discuss your child's attendance. A Fixed Penalty Notice may be applied for at this stage.
Less than 85% attendance	Referral to Lambeth Educational Welfare Service and preparations for Court action will be made unless there are extenuating circumstances.

***Covid Update: The school will exclude any absences related to Covid when looking at individual children's attendance records.**

Term time holidays

Holidays taken during term time are strongly discouraged due to the impact on a child's education. You should not take a family holiday while the school is open. However, we do understand that some circumstances may require families to leave the country or miss some school. All requests for time out of school must be made to the Headteacher. When deciding whether or not to authorise a holiday, the Headteacher will take into account a child's percentage of attendance. Should attendance be below good (95%), then the Headteacher has the right not to authorise the holiday with the possibility of a fixed penalty notice being implemented. The School may request to see flight tickets as evidence. A child may be taken off the school roll if they are absent for longer than 20 days.

Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Impact of poor attendance on attainment

Every absence or late arrival at school means crucial learning time is lost. Even short breaks from school can reduce a pupil's chances of succeeding at school by as much as a quarter, research by the Department for Education reveals (22nd February 2015). The research, based on extensive pupil absence figures and both GCSE and primary school test results, highlights the importance of ensuring more pupils regularly attend school, and ultimately leave with the qualifications needed to succeed in modern Britain.

The research highlights the striking differences in achievement between pupils with the best and worst attendance records. It shows:

- primary school pupils with no absence were around 1.5 times more likely to achieve the expected level, and 4.5 times more likely to achieve above the expected level, than pupils that missed 15 to 20% of key stage 2
- pupils with the lowest 5% of absence rates were more than 4 times more likely to achieve 5 good GCSEs, including English and Maths, and 22 times more likely to achieve the English Baccalaureate, than pupils with the highest 5% of absence rates

At Walnut Tree Walk in the 2016 and 2017 Key Stage 2 SATs, of the children whose attendance was below 90%, none of them achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths combined, demonstrating the negative impact poor attendance has.

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

Policy agreed by Governors: 22nd October 2020

Signed (Headteacher):

Signed (Chair of Governors):

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend This code will also be used for any Covid-related absence (ie a child is having to self-isolate or is quarantining).
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: chart showing how much learning time is lost due to poor attendance:

Attendance during one school year	Means this many days absence in one academic year	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means approximately this many hour of learning lost
95%	9 DAYS	2 WEEKS	50 HOURS
90%	19 DAYS	4 WEEKS	100 HOURS
85%	29 DAYS	6 WEEKS	150 HOURS
80%	38 DAYS	8 WEEKS	200 HOURS
75%	48 DAYS	10 WEEKS	250 HOURS
70 %	57 DAYS	11.5 WEEKS	300 HOURS
65 %	67 DAYS	13.5 WEEKS	350 HOURS