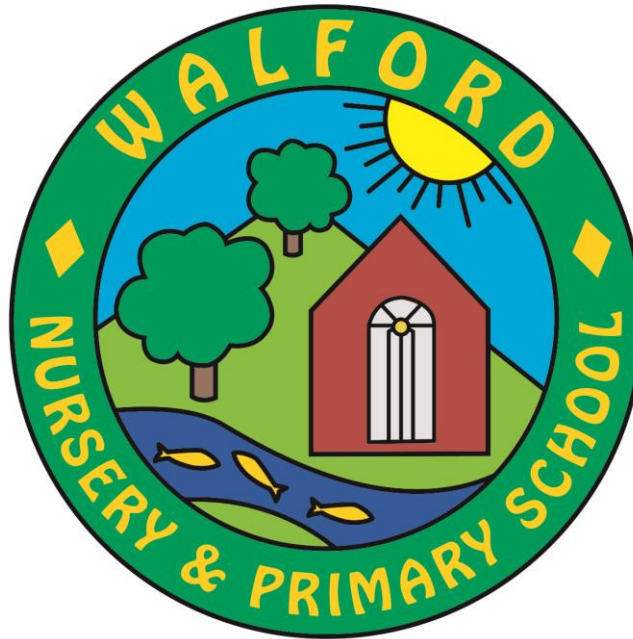


WALFORD NURSERY & PRIMARY SCHOOL



POLICY **for** **ATTENDANCE**

Reviewed: Spring 2024

Date for Review: Spring 2027

Policy for Attendance

Walford Nursery & Primary School believes that good attendance means attending school for every session, every day that the school is open.

Aims

At Walford Nursery & Primary School, we are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- promoting good attendance and punctuality;
- reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence;
- ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- acting early to address patterns of absence;
- building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- accounting for the whereabouts of every individual pupil if they are absent from school;
- recording and monitoring attendance and absenteeism, applying appropriate strategies to minimise the occurrence of poor attendance and absenteeism;

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Statutory Duty of Schools

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or carers to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once at the start of the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE 2022), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Philosophy

At Walford Nursery & Primary School, we promote a culture in which children enjoy coming to school, and do not want to miss out. We recognise the importance of good attendance and the impact it has on children's progress, attainment, enjoyment of learning and relationships within school. Good attendance helps a child to realise their potential and ensure they are motivated, confident and enjoy a diverse range of curricular opportunities and experiences.

We are committed to providing a full education for all pupils and embrace the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. The school works with parents and carers to ensure high attendance for all pupils.

For a child 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 children.

Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents / carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We aim to provide appropriate guidance to parents / carers concerning pupil attendance, taking into account guidance from Department for Education (**Appendix 1**).

Each year, the school will examine its attendance figures and use rigorous strategies to follow up absence with parents / carers. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

At the start of each academic year, Move Up Booklets and 'Meet the Teacher' events provide information about attendance for parents and carers.

Principles

Parents / carers are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly. At Walford, we will:

- work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued;
- send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed;
- work with all members of the school community in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy;

- encourage parents / carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance;
- ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the Registration Regulations and the Law relating to attendance.

Attendance is an important feature of school life. Consistent and rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures are in place. Every child absent from school is accounted for on a daily basis. Persistent absence is followed up by the Headteacher who will speak to parents / carers on an individual basis.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos;
- making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties;
- regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data;
- monitoring attendance figures for the whole school;
- making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance;
- holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- implementation of this policy at the school;
- monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors;
- supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils;
- monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies;
- issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance (Headteacher)

The Designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

- leading attendance across the school;
- offering a clear vision for attendance improvement;
- evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes;

- having an oversight of data analysis;
- devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data;
- arranging calls and meetings with parents / carers to discuss attendance issues;
- delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Louise George, Headteacher and can be contacted via the school office.

Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Class Teachers should raise any concerns regarding attendance with the Headteacher.

School Administration Staff

School administration staff will:

- take calls from parents / carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system;
- transfer calls from parents / carers to the Headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

Parents / Carers

Parents / carers are expected to:

- make sure their child attends every day on time;
- call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return;
- provide the school with at least two emergency contact number for their child;
- ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend school every day on time.

The Registration System

The school uses a computerised system (Bromcom) for keeping the school attendance records. National codes will be used to record attendance information (**Appendix 2**). Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.

In the event of computer failure, paper registers will be kept. Entries in paper registers must be in ink.

Registers are taken at the beginning of the morning session (8.45am) and the beginning of the afternoon session (EYFS/KS1: 12.30pm, LKS2: 12.50pm and UKS2: 1.10pm).

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. These include:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.

Punctuality

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.45am. Pupils must attend school on time to be given a mark for the session. The school gates and doors close promptly at 8.45am for all pupils. Pupils arriving after this time must sign in at the school office. Any pupil that comes into school this way will be marked as ‘late’ from 8.50am. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, which is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance Code: L). Any pupil who arrives at school later than 9.00am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning (Attendance Code: U). In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.15am, will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance Code: M).

Absence

If a pupil is unfit for school, parents / carers are asked to contact the school on each day of absence, as early as possible (before 9.00am). If a pupil is absent at morning

registration and the school has not received an explanation by the close of registration, the school office is informed and staff will contact the parent / carer as a matter of concern.

If a pupil has not been located, the Headteacher will make a decision based on information received, to contact the Local Authority, by phoning Children's Services in the first instance, followed up by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Attendance Team (this is a legal requirement) and / or the police. The school will include details of action that they have taken.

It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that reasons for absence are recorded accurately and kept up-to-date. In addition, they should be aware of and bring to the attention of the Headteacher any emerging attendance concerns (KCSiE 2023).

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents / carers. If this is unsuccessful, the school will refer to the School Nurse or other agencies for further support.

Early Identification and Intervention: Assess, Plan, Do and Review

For any child who is absent from school, it is essential to fully understand the reasons for this so that targeted, evidence-based interventions and support can be put into place.

All staff have an important part to play in promoting attendance. We recognise the importance of ensuring that key members of staff from across the school, including SLT, class teachers and SENCo, work in collaboration to consider and identify the holistic needs of the child and to overcome barriers to attendance. In accordance with the principles of early intervention, a graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review will be followed, utilising a range of school-based resources, evidence-based interventions and seeking advice and support from external services at an appropriate stage, when needed.

Appropriate assessments will be important to help understand the underlying reasons that may be contributing to attendance difficulties. This may be an assessment that focuses on the individual child's needs such as SEND assessments and wellbeing assessments or may include the holistic needs of the family, such as an Early Help assessment. All assessments will include the views of the child, as well as parents / carers and identify strengths (what is working well) and needs (what is working less well) based on the Graded Care Profile. Assessments undertaken may identify that a child is experiencing underlying emotional based needs that are contributing to non-attendance.

Information from assessments will inform an action plan with focussed targets developed in partnership with families, and other services, as appropriate. For example, Early Help may have a part to play in the delivery of support and intervention to promote engagement and attendance. Action plans should be personalised to effectively meet a child's needs and improve attendance and wellbeing outcomes.

Regular reviews of support and attendance plans are essential to monitor the impact of interventions and to adjust these accordingly. If, despite targeted support and intervention, attendance and wellbeing concerns persist, we may seek further advice and support from external services, including mental health services, specialist teaching and education services.

Planned and Unplanned Absences

There is overwhelming evidence that a high level of consistent school attendance is essential if children are to reach their full educational potential and achieve their targets. Walford Nursery & Primary School aims for all children to be in attendance for all of the 190 school days in the year. It is expected nationally that primary school age children will have an attendance of at least 95%, after allowing for illness, (this equals to 180 school days) and as a school we aspire to achieve or better this. Children whose attendance drops below the 95% level fall into the 'worrying' category and are less likely to achieve their full educational potential. We have rigorous procedures for monitoring attendance and poor attendance is followed up.

Planned Absences

In line with Government and Herefordshire Local Authority policy, planned absences for holidays during term time are not authorised by the school. In exceptional circumstances, the Headteacher can authorise absence, but only if there are strong and clearly explained reasons why the absence is necessary.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parents / carers notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents / carers to should 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.

Absences during term time for holidays or for other reasons are not a right and will not be automatically approved.

Leave can be granted only if the proper procedures have been followed:

- Applications for 'Planned Absences' should be made at least six weeks before the date required unless there are good reasons why a shorter period of notice could not be avoided.
- A Request for Absence Form (available from the school office / school website) must be fully completed, explaining clearly why any absence during term time is necessary and, if applicable, why 6 weeks notice could not be given. The school office will provide assistance with the form, if necessary.
- Leave will not be granted retrospectively.

- Authorisation of leave is a discretionary power of the Headteacher and conditions may be attached to this permission. If such conditions are not met satisfactorily, authorisation may be withdrawn.

There is no right of appeal against the Headteacher's decision. However, if parents / carers feel strongly that the decision has been reached unfairly, they may consider using the school's complaints procedure, which is explained in a separate policy document available on the school website.

All requests for Leave of Absence will be reviewed on an individual basis. Requests will not be unreasonably refused if the Headteacher is convinced that there are sufficiently strong or compelling reasons that are genuine and unavoidable. In each case, the school will take into account a variety of factors such as:

- the child's previous attendance history;
- the time of year (e.g., it is important for children to be present for statutory assessments which are currently held in May and June each academic year);
- parental circumstances;
- the rate at which the child is making progress and their capacity for making up the time lost;
- the nature of the trip (is it an exceptional experience?);
- previous similar requests (including holidays taken in current and last academic year);
- there may have been a significant trauma in the family recently and the Headteacher might agree that an immediate holiday might enable the child to better deal with the situation.

Permission is likely to be refused if:

- the child has already had some absence in the current or preceding year;
- the child's attendance history has been a cause for concern;
- it is near or during test times;
- it coincides with the start of the school year;
- the reason given is simply that the holiday is cheaper in term-time;
- the school believes that it may have a harmful effect;
- the reasons lack compulsion or justification, such as:
 - child or family member's birthday
 - poor weather in the school holiday period
 - availability of desired accommodation
 - holiday had been booked prior to consultation with the school.

Every request for absence will be monitored by the Headteacher. The Headteacher will make contact with the parents / carers to ascertain the purpose of the request. If the purpose of the request is a holiday during term time, the request will be unauthorised. If a holiday is taken after the school has refused authorisation, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, Local Authority officer or the Police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- the number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year;
- one-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission;
- where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason;

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Shorter Period of Notice

In circumstances where a shorter period of notice is required, the parents / carers should contact the Headteacher at the earliest opportunity to discuss the nature of event requiring absence. They will also need to complete the Request for Absence Form indicating clearly reasons why the short notice for the planned absence was unavoidable. If the Headteacher is convinced that the reasons are compelling and justifiable, the request will be considered, as appropriate.

Compassionate Leave

We understand that there may, on rare occasions, be unavoidable cause for absence, e.g., illness of a close relative. Although it is important that children's education suffers as little as possible, such requests will be viewed with compassion. Parents / carers should talk directly with the Headteacher.

In School Procedures

All applications for planned absences are to be forwarded to the Headteacher. The decision to authorise the leave will be made by the Headteacher in consultation with the class teacher and any other relevant member of staff. A decision will normally be made within 10 working days. If a longer consultation period is required in a particular case, the parents / carers will be notified accordingly.

Unplanned Absences

When a child is absent from school and no request for leave has been received or if no reason has been given for the absence, the absence will be recorded by the school as 'unauthorised'.

Absences can only be authorised when the Planned Absence Request procedure has been followed. It cannot be granted retrospectively, even if the reasons for absence are good.

Monitoring

In instances where a child's attendance either falls below an acceptable level or shows a regular pattern of absence or poor punctuality, parents / carers will be informed of the school's concerns by letter and invited to a meeting with the Headteacher, in order to discuss attendance concerns.

A Welcome Back

At Walford, we promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence. It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up-to-date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Unauthorised Absence

Attendance at school is checked daily through the school office. Parents / carers are contacted if no absence form has been submitted. Reasons for the absence is established and parents / carers are contacted until the school can ascertain the whereabouts of the pupil. The Headteacher is notified and appropriate action is taken until the pupil is located.

Where the school and the parents / carers fail to reach an agreement and the child is then absent from school, the absence is marked as unauthorised. Where the parents / carers keep a child away for longer than agreed, then the extra time is also marked as unauthorised.

It follows that leave of absence for more than two weeks must be seen as exceptional. The school will explore with parents / carers why such leave of absence is necessary. Where such leave is sanctioned, it constitutes authorised absence.

Promoting attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents / carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

Weekly newsletters on the website keep parents in touch with school events and help to foster the sense of a community.

Attendance figures are given to parents on annual school reports where no safeguarding issues may arise from providing this information.

Monitoring attendance

Unexplained absences by pupils are monitored on a daily basis. Contact is made with the parents / carers if a child has an unexplained absence and no explanation has been given to the school.

Each term, children's attendance rates are examined. If there is a problem with a child's attendance, either falling below the acceptable rate of 95% or showing a regular pattern of absence or punctuality, then parents / carers are informed of the school's concerns.

The attendance of these children is monitored and if no improvement is noted, a meeting is arranged to give a letter expressing concern and offering support.

Attendance target

The school works towards an attendance target of 100%. Weekly analysis of attendance figures towards the targets are established and the Headteacher is responsible for overseeing the work.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request a termly report from the Headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided for them and seek to ensure that Walford's attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence,

they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents / carers.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every three years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Links with other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Policy for Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Policy for Behaviour

Policy revised: Spring 2024

Date for next review: Spring 2027

Date ratified by the Governing Body:

Signed: _____

Chair of Governors

Date: 20/03/2024

Appendix 1



Absence Request Guidance for Parents / Carers



Every Day Counts!

Please also refer to the Walford Nursery & Primary School Attendance Policy for full details which is available through the school office or on the school's website.

Important Notes:

Herefordshire target for attendance is **100%**.

Walford Nursery & Primary School's attendance expectation is **100%**. All family holidays should be taken during published school holidays. **The school will not grant permission for any family holidays during term time.**

DfE Guidance from September 2013, updated March 2018

Education Regulations prohibit the proprietor (Headteacher) of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. The expectation of the Local Authority is that term time holidays should not be planned or booked as a matter of course as they are likely to be unauthorised and will lead to the issuing of a penalty notice (fine). The DfE documentation 2018 states:

The Parent of every child of compulsory school age is required to ensure that the child receive a suitable full-time education to the child's ability, age, aptitude and any special educational needs the child may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Failure of a parent to secure regular attendance of their school registered child of compulsory school age can lead to a penalty notice or prosecution. DfE March 2018

You should not expect your child's school to agree to an absence for a holiday in term time. Parents do not have a legal right to take children out of school on holiday. Taking a holiday during term time means that children miss important school time. Each application is considered individually, taking into account factors like the child's attendance record.

If you need to take your child out of school during term time:

- any absence must be requested as far in advance as possible (at least six weeks);
- never ask for time off during test periods unless for exceptional circumstances;
- do not book tickets until you have sought the school's permission.

Exceptional circumstances are defined as:

- forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting;
- exceptional significant family events or circumstances – these will be considered on an individual basis by the Headteacher.

The headteacher will consider every request detailed above individually but the following will not meet the criteria:

- visiting relatives;
- cheaper holidays in England and abroad;
- family day trips;
- visiting family / friends that have different half term holidays;
- weddings and visits to see family abroad.

Authorised officers have the discretion to issue a penalty notice without warning where the parent has chosen to take the child on leave during term time without authorisation, or evidence is subsequently found to suggest a child was away from school with the knowledge of the parent.

Parents that take unauthorised holiday leave or exceed agreed return-by dates will risk:

- their details passed to the Local Authority's Attendance Officer;
- losing their child's school place and re-registering with the Local Authority for a new school;
- being issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (a fine).

Please consider your child's absence carefully and contact the school if you have any queries.

APPENDIX 2 – CODES FOR ABSENCE

Code	Description	Meaning
/	Present (am)	Present
\	Present (pm)	Present
B	Educated off site (Not dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised Absence
D	Dual registration	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised Absence
G	Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
I	Illness (Not medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised Absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
K	LA arranged provision	Authorised Absence
L	Late	Present
M	Medical / Dental Appointments	Authorised Absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code / description)	Unauthorised Absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence
U	Late (After register closed)	Unauthorised Absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure/unavoidable cause	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

