



WHEELERS LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

2024/25

Ratified by the Governing Body on:

Signature of Chair of Governors _____

Dated: _____

1 Introduction

Wheelers Lane Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children by following our school vision. We reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

2. Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and relevant outside agencies so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

3 Expectations:

Overall Wheelers Lane Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

Birmingham City Council FAST TRACK policy and procedures

We adopt the procedures of Birmingham City Council's FAST TRACK attendance processes developed by ELIT (Education Legal Intervention Team) in order to have clear systems in place for working with parents to improve attendance;

'FAST-track to Attendance' is an Early Help approach to improving pupil attendance which also seeks to act quickly where there is unauthorised absence. It is for all schools, academies and alternative providers. There are no specific timelines to follow, the process can be used at a time which is right for the individual pupil and schools have only one formal letter they will need to send to each parent/carer.

The process aligns the thresholds for taking legal action for ongoing unauthorised absence with the Local Authority Education Penalty Notice 'Code of Conduct' and the Leave in Term Time (Penalty Notice) process.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Attendance Officer Home Visit Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

4 Roles and responsibilities

The **governing board** has overall responsibility for:

Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.

Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The **Head Teacher** is responsible for:

The head teacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Primary Attendance Policy and procedures of the school (FAST TRACK), and distributing these to parents. This may be delegated to the head of school and DLP (**Designated Liaison Person**)

Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.

Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

Completing class registers accurately every morning and afternoon as a legal obligation of the school.

Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.

Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.

Modelling good attendance behaviour.

Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated via the **DSL and CPOMS (Child Protection Online Monitoring System)**

Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance officer/DLP (Designated Liaison Person) is responsible for informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

Are being educated from home – Home education referral form to BCC

No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school – recorded on LA platform (Impulse)

Have been permanently excluded – recorded on LA platform (Impulse)

Parents are responsible for:

Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details for all parents responsible for having regular contact and influence around their child's attendance.

Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.

Updating the school if their details change.

The attendance of their children at school.

Promoting good attendance with their children.

Definition of a parent for this policy and in line with BCC policies:

“A ‘parent’ in relation to any child or young person, includes any person:-

- who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for the child, or who has care of the child***

This also includes absent parents who must have regular contact and an ability to influence the child including his/her attendance. Parental partners can be included

(whether or not they are married or the natural parent of the child) as they have ‘care of’ the child. If a pupil lives with a grandparent or older sibling as their main carer they can also be included. Education Act 1996”

Pupils - Compulsory school age

All pupils in Wheelers Lane Primary School are of compulsory school age. This would be defined as:

If a child becomes 5 years old between 1st September and 31st December, they are of compulsory school age on 1st January;

If a child becomes 5 years old between 1st January and 31st March, they are of compulsory school age on 1st April;

If a child becomes 5 years old between 1st April and 31st August, they are of compulsory school age on 1st September;

A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which the child turns 16.

5 Escalation banding for attendance

An escalation banding is in place to monitor all pupil's attendance figures and to ascertain when, who and how we would intervene in order to improve attendance.

Attendance %	Person/s Responsible for monitoring	Action
98%	Staff, including teaching staff responsible for daily registers and office staff for chasing up absences	Daily registers completed accurately. Inform DSLs of any concerns linked to attendance both verbally and via CPOMS.
96% - 100%	All staff	The aim is for all children to achieve about 98% attendance, allowing for one or two sickness or other authorised absences in the school year. Top attendance classes printed in the newsletter weekly.

90% - 95%	Attendance Team	Weekly monitoring of vulnerable children with attendance concerns and contact with attendance team where attendance is slipping and EARLY HELP is required to get attendance back up to above 95%
90% and below - PAs	Attendance Team/DSLs Involvement of ELIT where there are ongoing concerns and where the child has unauthorised absences which may result in a fixed penalty notice	BCC (ELIT) FAST TRACK PROCEDURES FOLLOWED including; EARLY HELP ACTION PLANS INFORMAL PARENT MEETINGS HELPFUL ATTENDANCE LETTERS – BCC SARM meetings

6 Definitions

6.1 Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not be authorised.

6.2 Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. An absence is also unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

If no acceptable reason is given within 5 school days, an absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

All decisions regarding unauthorised absences are made by the Head Teacher.

7 If a child is absent

Parents are requested to inform the school by telephone or through Parentmail, before school starts, on the first day of absence. If this is not possible then school must be informed on return to school. In the interests of the safety of our children the office staff are asked to make 'first day absence' calls to the home if no contact with the school has been made.

The school asks that parents try to arrange medical appointments for their children outside school hours but where this is not possible parents should inform the school. If a child has to go to an appointment during the school day they must be collected by an adult who will be asked to sign the child out on the Inventory system and provide evidence of the appointment.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then immediately contact the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

8 Requests for leave of absence

The school has adopted Birmingham Local Authority's policy on extended leave of absence. Leave during term time will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances – which is at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

If children are taken out of school for a holiday, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and parents may run the risk of being issued with a penalty notice. Parents may be fined by means of Penalty Notices or Prosecutions in the Magistrates Courts by the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.

Any requests for leave during term time should be made by completing the leave of absence request form and attend a meeting with the Attendance Administrator prior to any booking being made.

9 Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has a poor attendance record either by letter or a home visit. The school will implement the Three Houses Assessment Tool to gain further understanding for the reasons of absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be contacted by school for a meeting to discuss the problem. Depending on the circumstances, parents may be offered Early Help or a referral to the School Nurse.

The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. Ultimately, parents could be fined or face court proceedings for repeated unauthorised absence.

10 Pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA)

Where a pupil becomes at risk of PA, the school will:

- Welcome pupils back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meet with parents as part of BCCs FAST TRACK processes to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Lead weekly check-ins as required to review progress and the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups with the support of Family Connect.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- Children in need
- Children who are on our vulnerable children's list
- LAC and PLAC
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM (DIS)
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND

11 Parental involvement

The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

Parents will be expected to:

- Treat staff with respect.
- Actively support the work of the school.
- Call staff for help when they need it.
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support.

DfE – expectations for good attendance; **“Good attendance: listen, understand, empathise and support” Feb 2022**

12 Celebrating Achievements

Weekly attendance and punctuality figures are read out in assembly and the best attending class, and the class with the best punctuality, are rewarded with certificates and class trophies.

Class attendance figures are posted on the attendance board displayed in the main hall. Each term, the winning class will receive a class attendance treat, which is usually a cinema or bowling trip.

Children who achieve 97% or more in any term will receive a bronze, silver or gold certificate, a gold certificate is awarded for 100% attendance. There are special certificates for any child who has 100% attendance for an entire academic year. These children are also presented with a voucher to spend at WH Smith. Staff with 100% attendance for the year are also rewarded with a voucher.

Each term, the school operates an attendance week. All children, and staff, who are present every day and on time will receive an attendance prize.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

13 Attendance targets

The school sets attendance targets each year. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

14 Monitoring and review

Attendance data is monitored on a weekly basis. Children who are falling below 95% are supported through the Three House Assessment Tool, which is initially administered by class teachers. The focus is to support children with any educational concerns or concerns at home which can then be shared with parents. Key groupings, including ethnic groups, boys and girls, pupil premium children, SEND and EAL children, are also analysed to identify any patterns in attendance data.

The attendance team (Oliver Wood and Penny Johnston) will monitor attendance in liaison with the Head Teacher and follow up absences in the appropriate way. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the team, who will contact the parents or carers.

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

15 Lateness

School starts at 8.35 a.m. and the register is taken at 8.45 a.m. each morning.

Any child arriving after the 8.45 a.m. bell is late. Children will be reminded of the importance of coming to school on time and that being late is unacceptable. The register is closed at 8.45 a.m. After this time, a child is classed as late and will need to come into school via the main entrance by the office. The office staff will record the lateness which will be marked on the register in SIMS. Discussions with parents will take place as the children arrive.

Punctuality letters are sent home if a pattern emerges.

The parents and carers of children who regularly arrive late will be contacted by the attendance team and invited to meetings for further discussion.

The Attendance Administrator and Assistant Head Teacher will monitor all attendance and lateness. However, all staff should still make a note of any extended absence (longer than 3 days) or pattern of absence.

Children need to be collected promptly at the end of the school day. Any children remaining will be taken to the school office and logged. Parents will be asked for a reason as to why they are late picking their child/ren up from school.

16 Religious observances

The LA take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals. Parents will be required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance. Pupils are permitted up to 2 days of absence for religious observance during the academic year.

17 Appointments

As far as possible, parents will be encouraged to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to the **school office**.

If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent. Pupils will be expected to attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible. Parents are asked to notify the school office in advance of the medical appointment so that class teachers can be informed that the child will have a period of absence.

18 Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Whealers Lane Primary School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

A review is sent to the SLT daily detailing attendance to date.

Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed using CPOMS (Child Protection Online Monitoring System). The DLP ensures all FASTtrack communications are saved on to CPOMS in order for class teachers to see which children in their class are of concern for punctuality or attendance.

Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the **DLP** daily. The **DSL** is notified by the office attendance manager DLP if any concerning patterns or lowered attendance occurs.

Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.

If a pupil's attendance falls below **95 percent**, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. The letter also has an attached leaflet outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance.

If a pupil's attendance falls below **90 percent**, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the DLP contacts the parents to discuss this. In the case of any unauthorised absences parents would be contacted.

The pupil's attendance is monitored following the Birmingham City Council FAST-track to Attendance processes and, if attendance does not improve, parents are required to first attend an informal meeting in school with the DLP and then a SARM (School Attendance Review Meeting) and set targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, this may result in a penalty notice to all adults with the responsibility of parent (see section 6 for definition of parent related to attendance)

19 Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is **97 percent** – full details of the school's absence levels can be found on the **school website** and details of our absence rates can be found in the weekly newsletter.

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is November **2025**.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

BCC FAST TRACK WEBSITE LINK – KEY DOCUMENTS

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/download/1839/school_attendance_and_absence_-_fast_track_information_for_schools

Signed: _____ Dated: _____