

Waterfield Primary School



Attendance Policy

December 2022

Date	To review	Signature
January 2023	January 2024	H.Hope

Aim

Good attendance at school is essential for children's safety, prosperity and social development.

The aim of this policy is to support parents/guardians in upholding a child's right to be provided with a sustained education that will prepare them for their future life.

Introduction

All children are entitled to receive an effective, full-time education suitable for their age, ability and aptitude. It is the joint responsibility of the school and parents/carers to ensure that children who attend Waterfield Primary School receive that education.

Waterfield Primary School expects all children to attend school every day that the school is officially open, in full school uniform, arriving on time, registering for both morning and afternoon sessions and remaining for the full school day. Only the school has the right to authorise absence and the school will not do this if they believe that the child's progress and attainment is being significantly impaired by poor attendance.

Attitudes to school and attendance are set in the early days of reception class and 100% attendance should be aimed for by all children and their parents.

As part of the school's attendance policy, where there are concerns about a child's attendance, which have not been resolved by the school and/or when the school believes that the child's progress is being significantly impaired by his/her levels of attendance, referrals will be made to the Pupil Entitlement Unit or the school's Education Welfare Officer.

School Times and Dates

In order for good attendance, Parents/Carers need to be aware of the School Term Dates and Times. The School Term Dates are published on the school's website.

<https://waterfield.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/School-Term-Dates-Academic-Year-22-23.pdf>

The time of the School day varies slightly depending on the age of the children.

All children at Waterfield access at least 32.5 hours of school a week. Below is a table that summarises the times and locations for drop off/pick up for the different year groups:

School Hours each Week
Reception & KS1 = 32.5 Hrs
KS2 = 33.3 Hrs

Waterfield Drop Off & Collection Timetable – 2022-23



	Morning Drop-Off (Location and Time) School Register Closes at 9:00am for ALL	Afternoon Pick-Up (Location and Time) PLEASE PICK UP AT THESE LOCATIONS UNLESS ARRANGED WITH THE TEAM.
Early Years	8:30 AM – Hawkesmoor Rd Gate	2:55 pm Gate Open for flexible pick up till just after 3pm – Children finish at 3:00pm
Year 1	8:30 AM – Hawkesmoor Rd Gate Parents drop at Gates - please do not come onto the Playground unless essential.	3:00 pm – Hawkesmoor Rd Gate to enter Playground and Wait – if picking up older children parents must leave the site and walk around the outside of the School NOT cut through School.
Year 2	8:30 AM – Hawkesmoor Rd Gate Parents drop at Gates - please do not come onto the Playground unless essential.	3:00 pm – Hawkesmoor Rd Gate to enter Playground and Wait – if picking up older children parents must leave the site and walk around the outside of the School NOT cut through School.
Year 3	8:30am - Studio (Small Front) Gate	3:10pm – HALL DOORS – Opening ideally 2 minutes early when possible
Year 4	8:30am - Studio (Small Front) Gate	3:10pm – Studio (Small Front) Gate
Year 5	8:30am - Studio (Small Front) Gate	3:10pm – Studio (Small Front) Gate
Year 6	8:30am – Hawkesmoor Rd Gate	3:10pm - Hawkesmoor Rd Gate – Teachers will walk children to the gate and dismiss

The information above is also available on the school website:

<https://waterfield.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Collection-Drop-Off-Poster-2022-23-FINAL.pdf>

Crawley Schools' Attendance and Punctuality Policy

The Government expects:

- Schools and local authorities to:
 - promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
 - ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled and,
 - act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age, who are registered at school, attend regularly.
- Pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

How the School Monitors and Manages Attendance

- *The school will monitor the attendance of all pupils.*
- *All school staff are aware of their role in promoting good attendance.*
- ***The overall responsibility for school attendance monitoring lies with the Principal, supported by a specific team of senior colleagues.***
- *A named governor monitors school attendance. **The named Governor for School Attendance at Waterfield is: Chris Crunden (Chair of LGB).***
- School Attendance is monitored through attendance figures and management of the School registration system by: **Hilary Wright (Office Manager).**
- School Attendance is supported by the school pastoral and inclusion staff. The named champions supporting this are:
 - **Karen Billington (Inclusion Manager – SENDCO)**
 - **James Purveur (Deputy Principal)**
 - **Jemma Watkins (Assistant Principal)**
 - **Jane Newell (Learning Mentor)**

All schools are expected to achieve an overall rate of at least 96% attendance.

It is the responsibility of all school staff to be welcoming to children and their parents, creating an atmosphere where they both feel able to raise concerns and share any information that could affect the children's attendance. Due regard will be given to the fact that a register is a legal document and, taking this into account, registers will be marked conscientiously at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions.

It is important that all children arrive at school punctually. If a child is late, s/he must report to the school office to be marked in and ensure that, in case of emergency, the school has an accurate head count. It is most important that parents discuss any problem with either the class teacher or a member of SLT so that appropriate help can be offered. Equally, if a child needs to leave school for a medical appointment during school hours s/he must be signed out, and in again on return, at the office. Parents/carers are asked to make every possible effort to make appointments out of school hours.

If a child is absent for the day, the school expects parents/carers to make contact before the start of the school day via the absence email or dedicated absence answer phone, giving the reason for the absence and the expected day of return. If no word is received from the parent/carer, the school will phone the parent/carers on that day. If there is no response from parent/carers, the school will phone all emergency contact numbers for the child. In the case of a child being absent from school without contact, the school may carry out a home visit to ensure that the child is safe. If there is still no contact, then the school may contact social care or the police for a welfare check to ensure the safety of the child. The school follows up absences where no reasons are given and, if the reasons for these absences remain unspecified, they will be classed as unauthorised.

It is the parents' legal responsibility to ensure their child's good school attendance and punctuality. If attendance or punctuality falls below 96%, parents will be informed by letter. If attendance continues to be persistently unsatisfactory, the school will liaise with the parent by letter to explore the reasons for the falling absence.

The school will aim to work with families to improve attendance. This will be completed using the following pathway:

1. *Attendance is monitored and, if falling (regardless of reason), will be reviewed by senior staff).*
2. **A letter will be sent when attendance falls below (or seems to be falling close to) 96%; this is a reminder to parents that attendance is falling.**
3. **If attendance continues to fall or persists in a manner that causes concern, a letter will be sent requesting a meeting with senior staff at school to explore the reason for poor attendance.**

The school can support falling attendance by:

- supporting parents to provide medical evidence.
- offering support with techniques to promote good attendance.
- referring the child to the school's Inclusion/Pastoral Team to support the child's attitudes toward school.
- liaising with external agencies that may be able to support parents/carers with techniques and routines that result in good attendance.

If attendance continues to fall (and is not due to medically evidenced reasons), the school will seek the support of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). The EWO will engage with the family and offer further support, however, may also recommend additional action that may result in a 'Fixed Penalty' fine or court action being taken against the Parent/Carer. (See below).

If attendance does not improve in the agreed timeframe, the school will move towards official penalty action (see below).

It is the aim of the school at every stage to support and work with families to raise and maintain attendance at or above 96%.

Attendance Concerns Requiring 'Official Action' by School

If the child has unauthorised absences amounting to over 10 days in an academic year, the school will consider a referral to Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI) of West Sussex County Council (WSCC). Should a child's attendance/punctuality still not improve, PEI will consider whether legal action should be instigated against the parent/carer under the Education Act 1996. Alternatively, PEI may seek an Education Supervision Order in the family proceedings court.

Punctuality

Punctuality is very important. Arriving late for school is a poor start to the day causing embarrassment to the child, disruption to the class, unnecessary difficulty for the teacher who will already be teaching, and most importantly, disturbance to the learning of both the child and other pupils.

At Waterfield Primary School the school day starts at 8.50am and children can access the classrooms from 8.30am. Children who arrive after 9:00am are considered late and children who arrive after 9:20am are recorded as an unauthorised absence.

These instances count towards the tally of unauthorised absences mentioned in the preceding section.

Most of our children are brought to school by parents or carers and therefore poor punctuality is their responsibility. If children are not brought to school at the correct time, they come to believe this as the accepted norm and consequently do not place high value on education or punctuality and develop attitudes that can lead to truancy at secondary school and poor levels of attendance and punctuality in later life.

Illness & Medical Appointments

Medical and dental appointments should be made (where possible) outside of school hours. If this cannot be avoided, the child should be returned to school immediately after the appointment, unless advised otherwise by medical professionals.

Genuine illness will be authorised, although, if a child's medical absences are above the amount expected for a usually healthy child, (5 days or more) the school reserves the right to ask for medical evidence, e.g. a doctor's note or appointment card. If it has been necessary for a child to have extended absence due to illness, the school will work with the child, parents/carers and any other involved agencies to instigate a re-integration programme for that child.

If children are persistently absent through illness the school may still refer families to work with the Inclusion Department, EWO or indeed West Sussex's Integrated Front Door, for families to explore why the child is consistently suffering from bouts of illness. (This falls under the duty of care given to schools through the school's responsibility in child safeguarding).

COVID-19 or other high profile illness

The school will follow the advice of Public Health England and the Department of Education. The school will inform Parents/Carers of requirements in the event of a specific illness.

Authorised Absence

A child will be considered for authorised absence from school:

- At any time when they are prevented from attending by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause. An unavoidable cause is an incident of a serious nature in the immediate family of the child concerned. Where such an incident takes place, a member of the family is requested to contact the school at the earliest opportunity so that support can be provided, the length of absence agreed, and the individual child correctly registered.

- On any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent/carer belongs. The school recognises all religious beliefs and actively seeks to support families on such occasions. Where any family wishes to exercise such an entitlement, the parent/carer should complete a request for leave of absence form at the earliest opportunity requesting a religious observance day. In such legitimate cases, the school will agree the length of such an absence and the child will be registered appropriately.
- The Principal will only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.
- On unapproved holidays during Term Time. Please note absence for holidays within term time is not permitted. The school has a duty to ensure that this direction from central Government and West Sussex is upheld. Please note where suspected holiday leave is taken, yet is reported as sickness or for another reason, the school will be required to follow up with parents/carers to establish the nature of the absence. Such circumstances, if unable to be evidenced, may result in any mis-categorised absence being switched to 'unauthorised', at which point the normal process against threshold levels will be followed.

If a parent/carer wishes to take a child out of school during term time for an exceptional circumstance, they should seek permission through the 'request for leave of absence form' at the earliest opportunity. Each case will be treated on its merits but it is not the policy of the school to authorise such absences unless particularly extenuating circumstances prevail. Please note that the Education [Pupil Registration] [England][Amendment] Regulations 2013 which took effect on the 1st September 2013 removes all references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Principals may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

A form must be completed when withdrawal from learning is being requested.

Forms are available from the School Office.

Unauthorised absence

Parents/carers should be aware that Crawley Schools will follow the WSCC guidelines on issuing Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) and unauthorised absence, i.e. issue a FPN if a child accrues 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 10-week period (each half day counts as one absence),

- by non-attendance at school without an acceptable reason (see authorised absence)
- by arriving persistently late at school (after registration has closed)
- by parents/carers taking their child on an unauthorised holiday during the school term.

The FPN is an alternative to prosecution and gives parents/carers an opportunity to discharge their criminal liability by paying a fine of £120, which must be paid within 28 days. If paid within 21 days, the fine is reduced to £60. After 28 days, the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI) will consider prosecuting for the original non-attendance, not for the non-payment of the FPN. Further information on legal action can be found on GOV.UK.

In exceptional circumstances, a pupil may be granted authorised leave. However, regardless of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised, if after ten days the pupil fails to return and no contact can be made with the parents/carers, the school will make a referral to PEI which will make reasonable enquiries and consult with the Child Missing Education Team (CME). If the school can make contact with the parents/carers, it will warn them, if possible in writing, that it will consider taking the pupil off roll if s/he does not return by an agreed date. If the pupil does not return within 20 days and no reasonable explanation is given, the school will consult with CME and, in line with

DfE guidance, consider taking the pupil off roll. If taken off roll, parents/carers would need to reapply for a place through West Sussex County Council Admissions (North) on their return. A place cannot be guaranteed at the current school.

Encouraging and Promoting Good Attendance

Waterfield is an inclusive school. As a result, it is our belief that children should not be punished for poor attendance when the responsibility of children's attendance lies with the parent/carer. As a result, Waterfield promotes and celebrates good attendance through the holistic and supportive measures set forth in this policy to address falling attendance. As a school, Waterfield pre-empts falling attendance and promotes good attendance by offering an exciting curriculum, exceptional resources and engaging learning opportunities that are available to ALL.

Additional encouragement is fostered through specific intervention:

- Nurture Drop-Off.
- Supported break/play times.
- Specific variations to timetables.
- The use of specific reward-based interventions.
- The implementation of this policy to support families in being able to maintain good attendance.
- Offering a 2 week Half Term in the Autumn Term to allow families to access cheaper holidays.