

Watford Field School Infant & Nursery



Nurturing all to aspire to achieve

Attendance Policy June 2022

Next Review Date: June 2025

Introduction

Watford Field School (Infant & Nursery) is committed to achieving excellent levels of attendance for all children. We believe that if children attend school regularly and punctually they will be best able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Attendance and punctuality is a high priority for our school and was identified as a next step in our most recent Ofsted Inspection Report, March 2017, *'leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that: you continue to develop strategies to improve attendance and reduce absence'*.

Our school has an attendance target of at least 96%. **See Appendix 1.** School's attendance figure is reported to staff, parents and governors on a weekly basis via our school newsletter.

Parents' and Carers' Responsibilities

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

Parents should:-

- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct
- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings
- work in partnership with their children's school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- notify their children's school if they are absent. This should be done on the first day of absence by 9.15am via email or by leaving an answer phone message on our automated telephone line, 01923 227306 option 1, providing an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed - preferably in writing - when the children return to school
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- should not book holidays during term time

Watford Field School (Infant & Nursery's) Responsibilities

Watford Field School (Infant & Nursery) is responsible for supporting the attendance of all pupils and for dealing with problems that may lead to non-attendance.

Watford Field School (Infant & Nursery) is required to call attendance registers:

- Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.
- Registers must be taken at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session after the lunchtime period.
- Registers must record whether each pupil is present; attending an approved educational activity; absent; or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. In the case of a pupil of

compulsory school age who is absent the register must also indicate whether the absence has been authorised by the school.

- Registers should open and close at regular, set times and this information is publicised to parents.
- When calling the register the appropriate mark and/or symbol should be placed against each pupil's name - gaps should not be left so that entries can be made later. In marking registers, schools should use the national set of symbols as advised by the Department for Education (see Appendix 2)
- When the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the beginning of a session, the absence should be recorded as unauthorised and any subsequent correction to the register made as soon as practicable after the reason for the absence has been established.

Nursery Registration Open and Close Time

Morning Session

Register opens at 8.30am

Doors close at 8.40am, all children arriving after this time will be marked as late.

Register closes at 8.45am, all children arriving after this time will be marked as an authorised or unauthorised absence.

Afternoon Session

Register opens at 12.30pm

Doors close at 12.40pm, all children arriving after this time will be marked as late.

Register closes at 12.45pm, all children arriving after this time will be marked as an authorised or unauthorised absence.

Reception and Key Stage One Registration Open and Close Times

Register opens at 8.45am (soft start from 8.45am-8.55am)

Doors close at 9.00am, all children arriving after this time will be marked as late.

Register closes at 9.10am, all children arriving after this time will be marked as an authorised or unauthorised absence

Watford Field School (Infant & Nursery) will:-

- work actively to maximise attendance rates - both in relation to individual pupils and for the pupil body as a whole, as one of our key tasks
- address persistent absence
- address the attendance of vulnerable groups
- support parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance
- be sensitive to the needs of individual parents. We recognise that some parents have difficulty understanding written communications and we also recognise the reluctance of some parents to come into school
- make contact with parents by no later than 9.30am on the first day of absence if parents have not provided a reason for children's absence.
- contact parents if children do not return to school on the expected/agreed day following absence
- offer a soft start for Reception and Key Stage One children from 8.45am-8.55am to provide flexibility to parents who have children attending our Nursery and Field Junior School and to ease congestion in the local area
- work closely with the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) to improve attendance and punctuality

Punctuality

Watford Field School (Infant & Nursery) take steps to actively encourage excellent levels of punctuality. Lateness is monitored weekly and followed up.

School's policy and website clearly state the time at which each school session begins and finishes, including the time at which registers open and close. We do not keep a register open for the whole session.

When a pupil arrives late and the register is still open he/she is marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session.

When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and parent provides a satisfactory explanation, he/she is marked as 'authorised absent' for that session using the correct code.

When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, he/she is marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session. (Code U)

When a pupil arrives late having missed registration, his/her presence on site is noted in a book in the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation, etc.

Authorising Absence

Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, in itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered - or when no explanation is forthcoming at all - the absence will be treated as unauthorised and the parent informed.

School communicates to parents its policy with regard to the notification and categorisation of absence. Some parents, such as those whose first language is not English or who do not read or write may experience difficulty in providing notes. In such cases school will seek to make alternative arrangements.

School keeps all absence notes for at least a term and when a pupil's absence is a cause for concern to retain the notes until there is no longer a concern.

Requests for Family Holidays During Term time

Amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration (England) Regulations which come into effect on 1st September 2013 remove all references to family holidays and extended leave for holidays in term time. The amendments make clear that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is for the Headteacher to determine what constitutes exceptional circumstances and for them to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

A fixed penalty notice will be issued with regard to unauthorised absence if a pupil fails to attend school as required without a genuine explanation.

A pupil's absence must have been unauthorised for at least 15 sessions (one session is half day either am or pm) in the previous and/or current term.

Penalty notices will involve a parent paying a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within 28 days.

Failure to pay the fine within 28 days will result in either a prosecution for the offence to which the notice applies, or withdrawal of the notice (limited circumstances apply). Prosecution will be taken by the Local Authority under the Education Act 1996, section 444.

The issuing of penalty notices will comply with the code of conduct and practice as determined by the Local Authority

Monitoring and Review of Attendance and Punctuality

- It is the responsibility of the Governors to monitor overall attendance, they will receive termly reports from the Head Teacher on attendance.
- The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for ensuring that it is followed.
- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus
- 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.
- If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher for further action.

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

Attendance Ladder



Appendix 2

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Present at off site educational activity	Approved Education Activity
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school	Authorised absence
D	Dual registered at another educational establishment	Not expected to attend this session
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Holiday authorised by the school	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence
P	Supervised sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence for occupational reasons	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Not required to be in school (non-compulsory school age pupils)	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils (Planned)	Not counted in possible attendances

Detailed advice on the use of these registration codes can be found at www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00221879/advice-on-school-attendance