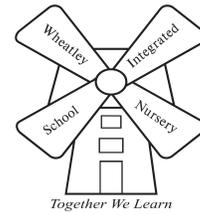


**John Watson School**



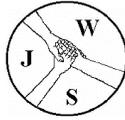
**Wheatley Nursery School**

# Attendance Policy

Signed by Sarah Simmonds and Sarah Coleridge, Joint Chair of Governors.

Date: January 2018

This policy will be reviewed as per the review schedule set by the Governing body or in accordance with policy updates issued by Oxfordshire County Council (whichever is sooner).



## **John Watson School** **Attendance Policy**

John Watson School's guiding principles underpin our policies and practice...

<i>We believe all children and young people have a right to feel safe and secure</i>	<i>We believe everyone should be valued for who they are and know they have a voice and will be listened to</i>	<i>We believe everyone has a right to be included within the wider community on equal terms</i>	<i>We believe learning should be stimulating, challenging and relevant for all</i>	<i>We believe all staff should be ambitious about what they can achieve in their role and be empowered to impact on pupil outcomes</i>
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### **Introduction**

John Watson School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a pupil 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 pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it, the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

### **School Procedures**

1. Any pupil who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised (/ \), unauthorised (O) or as an approved educational activity (V) (attendance out of school).
2. 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.

## **Lateness**

1. Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 9.00 on Primary site and 8.55 am on Secondary site. The registers will remain open for 15 minutes.
2. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed.
3. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration will be at 1.00 pm on Primary site and 2.00 pm on Secondary site  
The registers will close at 1.15 pm and 2.15 pm respectively.

4. Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers close.
5. Parents/Carers must inform the school if their child is going to be absent on or before the first day. This must be followed up in writing to explain the reason for the absence. If no reason is given within 2 weeks the absence will become unauthorised.
6. When making medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Medical/Dental appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation.

## **Absence from School**

### **First Day Absence**

- Parents are expected to contact the school on the day giving an explanation for the absence.
- If we do not receive a message from parents, office staff will telephone parents to request a reason for absence.
- A message via transport is not an acceptable form of communicating absence.
- The office administration team are responsible for ensuring that these calls are carried out.
- Office administration team record reasons for absence onto Integris.

### **Second Day Absence**

- Office administration staff will telephone parents to seek an explanation for the absence.

## **Continuing Absence**

- If there has still been no contact from the parent/s, a letter will be sent to parents requesting that they contact school immediately to inform us of the reason for their child's absence.

## **Ten Day Absence**

- Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to Oxfordshire County Council, Attendance and Engagement Team. This is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action they have taken.

## **Absence Notes**

Absence notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

## **Frequent Absence**

It is the responsibility of the Attendance Administrator to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve any concerns with parent/s. The Headteacher (or nominated member of staff) will liaise with the Attendance and Engagement Officer to ensure necessary action is taken when incidents of poor attendance and/or punctuality are identified.

Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. If this continues, the school will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward.

## **Penalty Notices and Legal Action**

### **The Law**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

- [a] To his age, ability and aptitude and
  - [b] To any special needs he may have.
- either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to ask the Attendance and Engagement Team to either issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a fine or further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the Attendance and Engagement Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period;
- they allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation;
- they fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;
- their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. All PA cases will be referred to the Attendance and Engagement Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

### **A Welcome Back**

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 other pupils.

### **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. Phone calls from class teachers can have a positive impact.

The Home/School agreement can be used in this way also.

### **Leave of Absence**

The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are ***exceptional circumstances***. Parents/Carers should seek permission from the Headteacher prior to the leave of absence period in question.

The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school **if** the leave is granted. Parents/carers who remove their children from school without authorisation or do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine/prosecution (see Penalty Notices and Legal Action above).

### **Attendance Awards**

The school will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance

Attendance Certificates will be given out three times per academic year to those pupils who achieve 98% or above attendance.

### **Attendance Targets**

The school has an annual target of **95%**

A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Our schools targets are:

- Attendance registers, by law, must be kept for at least 3 years; they are stored indefinitely on Integris. Previous paper registers are kept in our Archive Store
- Electronic back-up copies are made that are preserved for at least three years.
- The registers are safely stored in the Archive Store which can only be accessed by the School Business Manager, Headteacher and Caretaker

### **Register and Admission Roll keeping.**

The legal requirements regarding register and admission roll keeping can be found in The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006.

## **Categorisation of Absence**

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school at the time of registration must be recorded within one of these categories:

- [1] Unauthorised Absence;
- [2] Authorised Absence;
- [3] Approved Educational Activity.

### **1. Unauthorised Absence**

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without a valid reason.

### **2. Authorised Absence**

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

### **3. Approved Educational Activity**

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits;
- Sporting activities;
- Link courses or approved education off site;
- Most types of dual registration.

**Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.**

### **Alternative Provision**

A small number of our pupils attend Alternative Provision on a weekly or short period basis. Office administration staff will contact the alternative providers on a daily basis to confirm that our pupils are in attendance. Their attendance is recorded on a google document and stored within our attendance folder. A google document is kept separately for each site.