

Waterville Primary School

Attendance Policy

Waterville Primary is a happy, welcoming and caring school; we try hard to create an exciting and challenging place for your child to learn, where they can make the most of their talents and abilities.

We encourage parents and carers to be fully involved in their children's learning and in the life of the school, helping your child attend regularly; on time and ready to learn is a very important part of this.

This attendance policy sets out to answer your questions about attendance and shows how we can work together to ensure school attendance is excellent.

What the law says about attendance

The law says that parents have a legal responsibility to make sure that their child attends school regularly and keeping children off school without good reason can lead to fines and possible prosecution.

We have a legal duty to publish our absence figures to the Local Authority and the Department for Education; we want to report figures that we are proud of and we welcome your support in making this happen.

Why regular attendance is important

Sometimes being off school is unavoidable, but even a short absence can have a serious impact on your child's progress in lessons; but more than that they miss out on chances to develop other skills. Children who regularly miss school can find it hard to make and keep friends and are often anxious when they return to school. Children with a history of poor attendance often don't do as well in their exams as they should when they are older and their chances of getting a good job are reduced.

How do we record attendance?

Recording a child's attendance at school accurately is a legal requirement; we use the attendance codes agreed by The Department for Education; the codes you will see used most commonly are

- / Marked as present for the morning session
- \ Marked as present for the afternoon session
- L Late before the register closed
- I School has been notified that pupil will be absent due to illness
- M Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
- N No reason given for the absence
- O The school has chosen not to authorise the absence
- U Late to school after the register has closed

*Please see the website for a full description of codes you may see on your child's attendance certificate

Each half days attendance must be marked in the school register; the Headteacher will decide if this is Authorised (agreed) or Unauthorised (not agreed); you can give a reason for your child's absence which should be done in writing, but only the Headteacher can decide whether to accept this or not.

The Headteacher will usually agree to your child being off if they are ill, have a medical appointment that cannot be organised outside the school day or if an emergency arises.

If your child is regularly ill, the school may ask for a doctor's note or the Headteacher can choose not to authorise these absences.

There are a number of other reasons a Headteacher might not authorise your child's absence, these include:

- Taking your child on shopping trips or keeping them off on their birthday
- Arriving late for school (after the register has closed)
- Taking your child on a day trip or holiday not agreed by the Headteacher in advance.

How to tell us if your child is going to be off school

- Telephone the school office on 0191 2006351 before 8.55am and leave a message on the answer machine or speak to a member of staff; you must give a reason why your child is not able to attend school and tell us when you think they will be back.
- Send your child in with a note when they return to school even if you have telephoned the school

If you are unsure if you should keep your child off school or if it's ok to send them back to school, please contact the school office for further advice.

If we don't hear from you.

This is known as 'First Day Response'; we must be sure your child is safe and well and if we don't hear from you before 8.55am we will call you to find out where they are. It's **VERY IMPORTANT** that you keep us up to date with telephone numbers for yourself and other people on your emergency contact list. If we can't get hold of anyone to check your child is safe and well, we may visit your home or in extreme cases inform the police.

How will we let you know about your child's attendance?

We will let you know about whole school attendance during newsletters published on our school app and also termly assemblies.

We will let you know about your child's attendance during parent consultation afternoons which take place each term.

What is good attendance?

All children should aim for a minimum of 95% attendance for the reasons we have mentioned above.

How will we celebrate good and improving attendance?

Each week, children who attend school every day will receive an extra 'attendance playtime' on a Friday afternoon. Every term, any child who has 100% attendance will receive a termly certificate. At the end of the academic year any child who has a 100% attendance rate for the year will receive a special end of year treat.

What will we do if we are concerned about your child's attendance?

We monitor attendance closely and regularly; if your child misses more than 10% of their time in school for any reason they are known as 'Persistently Absent'; this level is set by the government. If your child's attendance is a cause for concern (below 95%) or they are persistently absent (90% or below) we will be working with you to look at how this can be improved. In most cases you will be invited into school to discuss your child's absence and we will develop an action plan with you to look at the reasons why your child is absent and put support in place to look at any problems there may be.

It is important that you do work with us to avoid the Headteacher asking The Attendance and Placement Team to get involved; the APT will:

1. Issue a Penalty Warning notice and ask the school to monitor your child's attendance for 4 weeks.
2. If your child's attendance does not improve, the school will inform the APT and they will Issue a Penalty Notice fine, in North Tyneside this is **£60 per parent per child** (rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days).
3. If the fine is not paid North Tyneside will pursue the matter to the courts.
4. If your child's attendance does not improve over the next 4 weeks you can be taken to court even if you have paid the initial fine for what is called an 'Aggravated Offence' and fines are then significantly larger and there is a chance of a prison sentence.

We want to avoid this at all costs, so if your child has a problem with coming to school, please let us know so that we can stop the problem getting worse.

Term Time Holidays

From September 2013 the law around holidays in term-time changed; the law now makes it clear that a Headteacher cannot agree to a child being absent from school for a holiday unless there are exceptional circumstances.

It is up to you to provide the school with evidence of exceptional circumstances, but only the Headteacher can decide if the reason you have given can be considered exceptional and agree the holiday. If the Headteacher doesn't give permission and you choose to go anyway, this will be recorded as unauthorised.

At Waterville Primary School we have a policy of not authorising any holidays during term time. **At present our school does not issue penalty notices.** However, the Headteacher and Governors closely monitor attendance and should a need arise this will be reviewed on a termly basis. If the school does adopt a different approach to the non-authorising of holidays then the school will request that the Attendance and Placement Team issue a Penalty Notice fine, in North Tyneside. This is **£60 per parent per child** (rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days). If you fail to pay your fine North Tyneside Council's policy is **ALWAYS** to pursue payment through the courts, this can lead to a fine of up to £2,500, a Community Order, Parenting Order or ultimately a prison sentence.

Lateness to school

We believe that every minute in school is very important. At Waterville Primary learning starts immediately at 8.55am. Children arriving late will miss this important learning. Children arriving late in school are often anxious about what they have missed and this may lead to them not wanting to come to school.

The school day starts at 8.55am and we need your child to be in class by then; arriving after this will result in a late mark. Our Breakfast Club starts at 8.00am with last entry at 8.35am. Children who attend our Breakfast Club have the best attendance and punctuality.

School closes the register at 9.30am. If your child arrives after this, they will be marked as having an unauthorised absence; **a Penalty Notice fine can be given if your child is late regularly.**

****If getting your child to school on time is a struggle, please tell us, we are here to listen and help****

How can you help?

- Make sure your child gets a good nights sleep
- Help your child with homework and reading so they aren't worried about being 'in trouble' at school

- Make sure that uniform and school bags are ready the night before and encourage your child to take responsibility for this as they get older
- Set off in plenty of time to get to school on time
- Breakfast is important either at home or at breakfast club
- Let the school know if your child is worried about anything that might stop them wanting to come to school
- Be positive about school even if your own experience wasn't great and where possible, get involved with school activities and events

Who is responsible for attendance at Waterville Primary

Mr Nugent (Headteacher), Mrs Logan (Deputy Headteacher) and Miss Hyde (SENDSCO) are all responsible for attendance and may contact you if attendance is a concern.

11th September 2019

This policy will be reviewed annually.

I have read and understood the school's attendance policy and understand that I am expected to work with school to make sure my child has the best possible attendance.

Child's Name:

Parent/Carers Name:

Signature:

Date: