

Attendance at Whitecote Primary School

The Law

Parents/carers are responsible for making sure that children and young people ... receive a suitable full-time education and attend school regularly either by regular attendance at school or through education otherwise (elective home education where parents take full responsibility to educate their child). The Supreme Court has clarified that regular school attendance is defined as that which is 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school' at the setting at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them.

If a child or young person of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly those with parental responsibility may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority (Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, it is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their children attend school regularly and failure to do so may result in action being taken by the Local Authority through the Magistrates' Court).

This means that local authorities with schools have legal powers to use parenting contracts, penalty notices, parenting orders and education supervision orders to address poor school attendance. In addition to these powers, local authorities and schools can develop other practices to improve attendance.

Head teachers are not allowed to authorise any requests for children to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time as the legislation only permits absence to be granted in 'exceptional circumstances'.

The law requires that all schools must take an attendance register to record children's attendance at school and the nature of any absence.

Whitecote Primary School

Whitecote Primary School views excellent attendance as crucial to your child's success at school as this is central to ensuring they can fulfil their potential. Missing out on lessons leaves your child vulnerable to falling behind, and children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The government expects:

- schools to ensure good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, 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 every day.
- All pupils to be punctual to school every day

Regular attendance is essential if your child is to make good progress at school, any unexplained absences, persistent lateness and erratic attendances will be automatically investigated by school and the Educational Welfare Officer. You can see from the chart below the impact that having time off school has.

Days Absent	Missed Time	Number of Missed Lessons	Attendance %
1	1 day	6	99.5%
2	2 days	12	99%
3	3 days	18	98.5%
4	4 days	24	98%
5	5 days	30	97.5%
10	2 weeks	60	95%
15	3 weeks	90	92.5%
20	4 weeks	120	89.7%
25	5 weeks	150	87.5%
30	6 weeks	180	85%
35	7 weeks	210	82.5%
40	8 weeks	240	80%

Whitecote Primary follows the Bramley Cluster Attendance Policy which consists of the following steps:

1. If your child is absent and a reason has not been given, school will contact you to find out. If there is no reply, then a referral to BCL (our attendance partners), or a home visit will be necessary
2. A Stage 1 letter will be sent out after any 3 days absence, this is not limited to 3 consecutive days.
3. If attendance continues to fall, then we will put in place a Fast Track for 4 weeks. This is a structured programme that is monitored every week by the Attendance Team and gives families the opportunity for improvement.
4. However, if attendance does not improve, you will be invited to attend a formal School Attendance Panel to discuss the reasons for poor attendance and to examine any support needs.
5. Should attendance continue to decline, then school will have no option but to contact the Local Authority. As a result of this parents/carers may be issued with a penalty warning letter and subsequently a penalty notice for irregular school attendance.

We regularly monitor all attendance across school. If you are having difficulty getting your child into school, we are here to help and support you and would urge you to call the school so that we can talk to you.

The Attendance Team at Whitecote Primary School are:

Mrs. Stead – Head Teacher

Mrs. Tweed – Pupil and Family Support Manager

Mrs. Gillard – Community Liaison Manager

Absences

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible by calling/emailing the school or using the StudyBugs app.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

A parent/carer can request a Leave of Absence by contacting the school and asking for a form. This must be completed and given back to school as soon as possible so that a decision can be made.

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- death of a close relative,
- attendance at a funeral,
- significant trauma in a family,
- respite care of a looked after child,
- a housing crisis which prevents attendance.

Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised absences are those which are not considered acceptable and permission will not be granted. This includes:

- holidays in term time;
- days-out in term time;
- truancy or absconding during the school day;
- closure of a sibling's school (for any reason);
- friend and family celebrations e.g. birthdays, weddings, anniversaries;
- any activity that can be undertaken out of school hours or at the weekend e.g. shopping/haircuts;
- children who arrive at school after the registers have closed;
- children being kept at home because school-age siblings are not attending school due to illness;
- children being kept at home to care for younger children or sick relatives;
- travel and transport issues e.g. car broken down; bus missed;
- unexplained illness and health appointments;
- Children who are collected early, before the end of the school day due to parent/family appointments (including medical appointments);
- Adverse weather conditions

Lateness and punctuality

Being late to school has a significant impact on the amount of learning time lost over a school year. The school will follow up unexplained absences and may contact the police to do a welfare check.

Impact of being late for school:

Minutes late each day	Number of days of education lost over a year
5 minutes	3.4 days
10 minutes	6.9 days
15 minutes	10.3 days
20 minutes	13.8 days
30 minutes	20.7 days

Rewards

Whitecote celebrates excellent attendance with the following rewards:

Pupils with 100% attendance:

Weekly:

- £10 voucher draw (EYFS/KS1 and KS2)
- Entry to a lucky dip prize raffle (2 winners in EYFS/KS1 and 2 winners in KS2)

Half-Term:

- Class staff prize for least amount of absences
- Parent Raffle - 4 x £25 vouchers (2 for pupils in Rec/KS1 and 2 for pupils in KS2)
- 100% Challenge winners' certificate presented at special Attendance Assembly

Term:

- 100% attendance badge and 30 mins extra play

Year:

- 100% attendance trophy
- LUFC reward
- Gold 100% badge
- Take part in a school reward afternoon

Pupils with 97%+ attendance:

Half-Term:

- 97%+ Certificate

Term:

- 30 mins extra play

Year:

- Take part in a school reward afternoon