

The Wren School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Purpose and Background

There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement. Of students who miss more than 50 per cent of school only three per cent manage to achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including Maths and English. 73 per cent of students who have over 95 per cent attendance achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C. *(Improving attendance at school DFE 2011)*

Regular attendance at school is crucial if The Wren School students are to achieve their potential and stay safe. Poor attendance patterns often start at a young age and worsen as students get older. It is vital that such patterns are picked up quickly, either through the transition process or if attendance starts to drop during a students' time at The Wren School. It is important to establish why a student has poor attendance and or punctuality and to address these issues in a positive manner. *(How to improve school attendance and punctuality, Ofsted 2013)*

Policy objectives

We will ensure that:

- Students, parents/carers and staff at The Wren School value good attendance and recognise that good, regular attendance is an achievement in itself;
- We raise the educational achievement of all students in the school;
- We value the individual and are socially and educationally inclusive;
- We promote regular school attendance at whole school level, class level and individual child level;
- We aim to raise the profile of attendance ensuring all individuals are convinced that attendance can and will improve. In addition, a strong partnership must be built between the parents/carers, students and the school. Staff reinforce our 100% expectation to parents and students.

Management of the policy

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| School | This policy is implemented and managed by the assistant headteacher in liaison with the Headteacher. |
| Governing body | The governing body will review and update this policy annually in line with all relevant legislation. |
| Approval | Approved by Full Governing Body – December 2018 |
| Next review due | September 2019. |

Associated policies

- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Health and safety policy
- Learning and teaching
- Equal Opportunities
- Pupil Premium
- SEN/D policy

Attendance practice and procedures

The register for each form is a legal document to which reference is made for court cases, and which is used as a source of statistical information. It may be audited by the Local Authority. Therefore, form leaders will take a register using Arbor during morning form time and again in the afternoon during the period 5 lesson. If the form leader cannot access Arbor, then a paper register must be taken and delivered to the admin block and the registration will be inputted from there. In addition, a register must be taken within the first 5 minutes of each lesson.

Students may not leave the site during school hours without being collected by a parent/carer for a pre-authorized appointment, medical or exceptional circumstances. Permission may be given for a student to leave site due to the aforementioned reasons if prior notice is given by parents/carers in the form of a phone call, email or note. Students report to school admin to sign out and their form leader or teacher will be notified by an administrator to amend the register.

If a student is absent due to an illness, parents/carers are requested to call the school prior to 8.50am. Form leaders will be informed of a student's absence by an administrator via email. Where a student is absent and a parent/carer has not called the absence line, a text will be sent to their parents/carers informing them of their son's/daughter's absence and asking them to contact the school. Where contact is not made, a phone call home will be made after 9.30am. If we are unable to make contact, an email will be sent to the primary contact. In the absence of an explanation for absence, on a student's return to school, parents/carers are requested to provide a signed note. Where a student is absent for a given period of time without a message from parents/carers, a member of the pastoral team will try to make contact, with the potential of involvement from Reading's education welfare service. If a student is likely to have a prolonged period of absence, which has been approved by a medical professional, work may be collated and sent home for them to complete. Where a student has visited a doctor or any other medical professional, a signed note, appointment card, copy of the prescription or any evidence of the appointment should be made available to the school for their records.

Any foreseen absence must be agreed by the headteacher in advance e.g. due to a bereavement to attend a funeral. Any foreseen absence not agreed in advance will be classed as an unauthorised absence and may result in legal action e.g. unauthorised holiday (see Appendix 1).

As a school, we realise that unfortunate sequences of events, genuine ill health or accidents can lead to an increase in absence and seek to be as supportive as possible to parents/carers and students in these circumstances. However, where absences are not of this nature, school enforcement measures will be taken.

In the case of sporadic unauthorised absence, the following actions will be applied:

- Note in planner reminding parents to provide a written explanation explaining their child's absence;
- Warning letters sent home (see Appendix 2 & 3);
- Parents/carer invited to school for meeting
- Referral to education welfare officer (see Appendix 4)

The year leaders and/or key stage leaders (pastoral team) will analyse attendance and punctuality regularly and refer any concerns to the assistant Headteacher (pastoral). Regular form attendance is provided to form leaders which is then relayed to the students within each form.

If, during one of our regular attendance monitoring checks, a student is identified as having an attendance rate of less than 95%, a letter of concern is sent by the key stage leader to the parent. If the attendance then continues to fall or shows no signs of improvement even after an initial warning letter is sent home and discussions with members of the pastoral team are had, a further warning letter will be sent by the assistant headteacher or they will be referred to the education welfare officer who will write formally to the parent indicating serious concerns and potential court action. If there is no improvement, a meeting will be called with parents where they will be formally told that if attendance does not improve, the matter will be referred for court action. At this stage, the school will require evidence that medical advice has been sought before authorising any absence due to illness. If attendance falls below 90%, a student is regarded as being a persistent absentee.

If at any time, the student's attendance does improve, then the procedure will be halted. If the attendance subsequently declines, the procedure will be picked up at the point where it was left.

At the end of every two terms, the pastoral team will reward 100% attendees with certificates in assembly and, to add further incentive, in each year group all students with 100% attendance are included in a 'draw'. The winner from each year will receive a reward that is agreed by school council. Further rewards will be offered to the form with the best attendance and punctuality each term.

Like attendance, punctuality is extremely important. Regular reports will be produced to flag up any concerns regarding punctuality. Students will receive an incremental consequence based on the number of lates within a given week or period of time. If the situation does not improve, phone calls home and/or a warning letter of concern will be sent to their

parent/carer (Appendix 5), leading onto contact from The education welfare officer.

Students will be commended for improvements in punctuality and, as with attendance, the course of action will be resumed if punctuality then starts to decline.

Associated documents

Improving attendance at school, DFE 2011

How to improve school attendance and punctuality, Ofsted 2013

Appendices

1. Request for term-time absence
2. Initial attendance warning letter
3. Persistent absence warning letter
4. Role of Reading's EWO (September 2018 – July 2019)
5. Punctuality warning letter

Appendix 1: Request for Term time Absence



Request for Leave of Absence during Term Time

To be completed at least three weeks before the proposed leave of absence, i.e. holiday, medical procedure.

Education is a once in a lifetime opportunity and the Department for Education has recommended that holidays should not be taken in term-time. Therefore, approval for leave of absence during term-time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. In such situations, the school will need to see evidence to support the requested absence.

Please be aware that if you take your child out of school for any unauthorised leave of absences during term time, you may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice. **A Fixed Penalty Notice is issued per parent, per child.**

Parent/Carer(s) to Complete ALL BOXES in first section:-

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Name of Student | Form: |
| Print parent(s) name and address Tel No: | Date this form completed |
| Purpose of absence | |
| Reason for absence during term time (or attach a letter of explanation) | |
| Proposed start date of absence. Number of school days = | |
| From (dates): To: | |
| Signed.....Parent/Carer(print name) | |

School to complete –

| | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Number of days absence requested | | |
| Percentage attendance | 12 school weeks prior to request: | From start of academic year: |
| | | |
| Has holiday during term time been requested previously and if so when? | | |
| Assistant Headteacher for Pastoral Signed Arbor Code | Comments | |
| Approved / Not approved? SignedHeadteacher Date..... | | |

Date School received form:

Entered on Arbor:

Please return form to Student Reception



The Wren School
61-63 Bath Road
Reading
RG30 2BB
☎ 0118 9591868

<date>

Dear <parents'/carers' names>,

WARNING LETTER - Absence Concern

I am writing to share our concerns that <students name>'s attendance is currently <?%>. The whole school target for attendance is 97% and government expectations are 95%. You will see that <student's name>'s attendance falls below this.

If your child takes more than two days off school in a row, medical proof will be required for the absence to be recorded as authorised. If no medical proof is received by the school, then your child will be recorded as unauthorised for that period of absence.

The Education Welfare Service accept the following as medical proof:

- GP appointment card;
- A text message from the health care provider, e.g. dentist, doctor, orthodontist;
- Sight of medication, named and dated appropriately;
- Sight or photocopy of prescription, named and dated appropriately.

As you know, a good education gives your child the best possible start in life. A good education helps young people to obtain secure employment and develop into mature and responsible citizens. Research has shown that poor attendance can disrupt their learning and that of other students. These children quickly begin to fall behind their peers and often never fully catch up with gaps in their skills and knowledge.

I am certain that the academic achievement of your child is of utmost importance to you so I am sure you will work with us to improve **his/her** attendance and enable **him/her** to be given the best chance to succeed at The Wren School.

Kind regards,

Mr O Harrison/A Hollands
Key Stage Leader

Appendix 3: Persistent Absence Warning letter



The Wren School
61-63 Bath Road
Reading
RG30 2BB
☎ 0118 9591868

<date>

Dear <parents'/carers' names>,

Reference: Persistent Absence Concern

I am writing to share our concerns that <student's name>'s attendance is currently <?%>. The whole school target for attendance is 97% and government expectations are 95%. You will see that <student's name>'s attendance falls well below this.

Once a student's attendance falls below 90%, they are regarded by OFSTED, the government, the local council and The Wren School as being persistently absent and will be investigated by the Educational Welfare Officer. If your child takes another day off school, medical proof will be required for the absence to be recorded as authorised. If no medical proof is received by the school, then your child will be recorded as unauthorised for that period of absence.

The Education Welfare Service accept the following as medical proof:

- GP appointment card;
- A text message from the health care provider, e.g. dentist, doctor, orthodontist;
- Sight of medication, named and dated appropriately;
- Sight or photocopy of prescription, named and dated appropriately.

As you know, a good education gives your child the best possible start in life. A good education helps young people to obtain secure employment and develop into mature and responsible citizens. Research has shown that poor attendance can disrupt their learning and that of other students. These children quickly begin to fall behind their peers and often never fully catch up with gaps in their skills and knowledge.

I am certain that the academic achievement of your child is of utmost importance to you so I am sure you will work with us to improve **his/her** attendance and enable **him/her** to be given the best chance to succeed at The Wren School.

Kind regards,

Mr D Zell

Assistant Headteacher – Pastoral Leader

Appendix 4: Role of Reading's Education Welfare Service (EWS)

For the 2018/19 financial year:

The Wren School will receive a 2 hour visit per fortnight by an assigned education welfare officer (EWO). This visit will involve:

- initial assessment/plan;
- discussions around student attendance, especially those of concern (below 95%);
- support in encouraging students to attend school and on time.

Along with the above, the EWO will carry out home visits (sometimes accompanied by a member of Wren School staff) and will attend meetings around safeguarding matters.

Following this, if concerns are not resolved, the EWO will open a Case File and there will be a cost per case factored in to the 2017/18 year's offer in addition to the base charge which will be calculated once Reading Borough Council has a clearer idea of the school's needs.



The Wren School
61-63 Bath Road
Reading
RG30 2BB
☎ 0118 9591868

<date>

Dear <parents'/carers' names>,

Reference: Punctuality Concern

I am writing to share our concerns that <student's name>'s punctuality is currently <?%>. The whole school target for punctuality is 97% and the government expectation is 95%. You will see that <student's name>'s punctuality falls below this.

As you know, a good education gives your child the best possible start in life. A good education helps young people to obtain secure employment and develop into mature and responsible citizens. Research has shown that punctuality to school is critical and hugely important, both for the individual child and for the sake of his or her peers. Late arrivals are disruptive for the whole class and can impact significantly on how well a child settles. The importance of punctuality is underlined by the government requiring schools to classify lateness to school as truancy.

I am certain that the academic achievement of your child is of utmost importance to you so I am sure you will help work with us to improve **his/her** punctuality and enable **him/her** to be given the best chance to succeed at The Wren School.

Kind regards,

Mr D Zell

Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral Leader)