

Western Springs Primary School



Attendance Policy

Approved by:	IEB (Mrs Marie Smith)	Date: 13/09/2019
Last reviewed on:	01/09/2019	
Next review due by:	01/09/2020	

Western Springs Primary School

Attendance Policy

September 2019



'Preparing today for our future tomorrow'

Western Springs Primary School places a high priority on pupil attendance and punctuality. Regular attendance at school is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential. We strive to promote an ethos and culture in which pupils feel highly motivated to learn and where each pupil feels valued and secure, thereby encouraging excellent attendance.

Children of compulsory school age should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Many children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

The government expects primary schools to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (less than 90%)
- Ensure every pupil has access to full time education, to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence

Detailed below are the attendance categories used at Western Springs Primary School:

Outstanding Attendance	100%	0 days absence	Gives a child the very best chance of success.
Satisfactory Attendance	95%	Less than 10 days of absence	Few interruptions to learning – a good chance of success.
Worrying Attendance	Between 90-95%	Between 10-18 days of absence	Your child has missed 3 weeks of learning and their attendance is now being monitored.
Serious Concern	90% or less	19 days or more	Your child is now defined as a 'Persistent Absentee' pupil by the Department for Education. It is less likely that good progress in learning is being made as at least four weeks' learning is being lost in the year. Your child's attendance is now being closely monitored and if it does not improve you are at risk of being fined.

The Role of Parents

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends school regularly and punctually on a daily basis. To this end, they are responsible for:

- Ensuring their child attends from **8.55am**
- Notifying the school of a pupil's absence on the first day of absence by telephone, e-mail, letter or in person by 9:30am
- Completing a request form for absence in term time for exceptional circumstances (available from the school office)
- Providing medical evidence for 5 or more days absence due to illness
- Meeting with a member of staff to discuss their child's attendance when necessary

If a child fails to arrive at school and we have not been notified by a letter or phone call from the parent/carer advising us of the reason for the absence, we will call or send a text message advising the parent/carer that the child is not in school.

If we are unable to make contact with parents/carers, we will telephone the other people listed as emergency contacts for the child. If we are unable to confirm the whereabouts of the child we will contact the school's Educational Welfare Officer, or exceptionally, the police. This system helps to prevent a situation where parents think a child is at school, and the school thinks that the child is at home.

Absence can be reported by:

Telephone on 01889 221890– messages can be left with staff or on the answer machine

E-mail to office@westernsprings.staffs.sch.uk

Letter to the class teacher

If your child is going to be absent for a number of days, please let us know at the time of initial contact; this will save you contacting us each day of the absence.

Unauthorised Absence

If an acceptable reason for absence is not supplied, the absence will be recorded in the register as **unauthorised**. The Education Welfare Officer will check the registers at various times for unauthorised absences and will take any action considered appropriate which may include a fixed penalty.

The number of unauthorised absences will be entered on the annual report to parents.

Managing Lateness

If your child is likely to be **late**, please try to let the school know as soon as possible. We will be sympathetic when lateness cannot be avoided. However, persistent lateness will be reported to the Education Welfare Officer, who will take any appropriate action.

Where pupils miss registration, and an adequate explanation is not provided, the absence will be recorded as an "unauthorised absence" for that session.

Children who leave school for any reason during the school day must be signed out at the academy office by their parent, carer or appropriate adult. Parents are strongly encouraged to make dental or medical appointments outside of school hours where possible.

The role of the school

- Make first day absence calls and record reasons for absence.
- Regularly monitor pupil's attendance
- Support families in ensuring their child/children attend school regularly and punctually on a daily basis
- Inform and meet with parents whose children's attendance causes concern
- Issue a letter if a child's attendance falls below 95% (*see page 9*), and a second letter in the event of attendance falling below 90% (*see page 10*)
- Provide parents with an attendance letter on a termly basis advising them of the category that their child's attendance falls into (Green, Amber or Red)
- Make referrals to the Education Welfare Officer where appropriate.
- Make referrals to appropriate supporting agencies, including School Nurse and Local Support Team

Family Holiday during Term Time

We discourage holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised. It is paramount that we are aware of every child's whereabouts if they are not in school. Therefore, it is imperative that in the event of your child not attending school that we are notified of your intention to take them on a family holiday and would ask for a request to be made using the relevant form (available from the school office).

Please addition guidance on requesting leave during term time (Appendix A).

Rewarding Good Attendance

With a view to encouraging and rewarding good attendance we will:

- Present individual certificates on a termly basis for 100% attendance
- Present individual certificates at the end of the Summer Term for 100% annual attendance
- Recognise good attendance on a weekly basis during assembly and award a trophy to the class with the highest weekly attendance
- Reward the class with the highest attendance each term

APPENDIX A: Guidance Notes for Parents Requesting Leave in Term Time

1. Parents who want the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully, **complete the attached form and send it to the head teacher**. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered **well before** the desired period of absence. Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision regarding their request. Head teachers cannot authorise any leave of absence unless the request is received before the period of absence begins.

2. The Department for Education makes it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Head teachers now also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

3. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time.

4. Staffordshire County Council understands the challenges that some parents face when booking holidays particularly during school holidays. However, we believe that, in order to ensure children receive the best education and prospects, that they should be in school during term time.

5. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence. In considering a request, the school will take account of:

- the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request
- the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements
- the overall attendance pattern of the child
- frequency of similar requests
- whether the parent made the request in advance
- students/pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS will **not** normally be granted leave of absence

6. Where parents have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The head teacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. However, head teachers may choose to liaise with each other as part of their decision-making process.

7. Should the school decide to grant leave of absence, but the child **does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

8. Should the school decide **not to grant leave of absence** and parents still take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**, which may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine and failure to pay this could lead to eventual Court proceedings.

9. The Local Authority will continue to monitor all school absences during term time and support head teachers in challenging parents who ignore the law.

Exceptional Circumstances which **MAY** justify approval include:

- members of the armed forces who are returning home from active duties
- emergency services personnel who are unable to take leave at certain times of the year
- employees who are prevented from taking family holidays outside of term time
- the death of an immediate family member
- a child or parent/carer receiving medical treatment abroad –additional guidelines apply &evidence must be supplied
- families who have evidence that they have experienced genuine disruption to their originally agreed travel plans e.g. severe weather conditions or civil unrest

The following do not qualify as 'exceptional':

- availability of cheap holidays
- availability of the desired accommodation
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods



Western Springs Primary School

Request for leave during term time

To the head teacher of Western Springs Primary School,

Date.....

I request consideration of a grant of leave of absence from school during term time for:

My child (full name)

for the period from (date) to (date)

The **exceptional** circumstances and reason for this request are: -

.....
.....
.....

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows:

Child's full nameSchool attended

Signature of 1st parent/carer(s) Print Name.....

Signature of 2nd parent/carer(s) Print Name.....

Please return completed form to the school office.

The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether the request is authorised or not.

For Office Use Only

Current Attendance.....%

Last Year's Attendance.....%

Number of school sessions taken as leave during term time (this academic year)

Agreed/Not Agreed

Request for leave is agreed/is not agreed for the above student to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Rationale to decline request:

.....

.....

SignedHead teacher

Date

Notification of decision:

Date letter sent to parent/carer.....

APPENDIX C - School Leave Letter Agreed



Heart of the Community

Western Springs Community Primary School

Western Springs Community Primary School, School Road, Rugeley WS15 2PD
Tel: 01889 221890 E-mail: office@westernsprings.staffs.sch.uk
www.westernsprings.staffs.sch.uk
Acting Headteacher Mrs R Willington

(Parent/carer(s) name and address)

Date

Dear *(Parent/carer(s) name)*,

(Child's name and date of birth)

Thank you for your letter dated *(date)* requesting permission for *(pupil's name)* to be absent from school from to

You will be aware that the Department of Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time. The changes made it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Local Authority and school governors support this; therefore students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

Having looked at your application, I feel that your request can be supported in this instance.

Therefore, the absence to include the dates requested will be authorised.

Our key priority is to ensure that your child(*ren*) are as successful as possible and are able to achieve *(his/her)* full potential. I would therefore ask that you support your child in catching up on the time they will miss in school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs R Willington
Headteacher

APPENDIX D – School Leave Letter Not Agreed



Heart of the Community

Western Springs Community

P r i m a r y S c h o o l

Western Springs Community Primary School, School Road, Rugeley WS15 2PD

Tel: 01889 221890 E-mail: office@westernsprings.staffs.sch.uk

www.westernsprings.staffs.sch.uk

Acting Headteacher Mrs R Willington

(Parent/carer(s) name and address)

Date

Dear *(Parent/carer(s) name)*,

(Child's name and date of birth)

Thank you for your letter dated *(date)* requesting permission for *(pupil's name)* to be absent from school from to

You will be aware that the Department of Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time. The changes made it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Local Authority and school governors support this; therefore, students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

I have considered your application very carefully. Although I understand the reason for your request, I am unable to approve leave of absence in this instance, as I believe the circumstances are not exceptional.

Therefore, if your child is away from school during this period it will be recorded as Unauthorised Absence.

As a school we are obliged to inform you that you may be subject to a Penalty Notice if your child's absence from school is unauthorised. This is in line with Staffordshire County Councils Code of Conduct and reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school.

Our key priority is to ensure your child(ren) are as successful as possible, are able to reach *(his/her)* full potential and gains maximum benefits from *(his/her)* educational experience.

I would hope that upon reflection you are able to support this decision in line with the Local Authority and Government policy, that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

Yours sincerely

Mrs R Willington
Head teacher

APPENDIX E – Termly Attendance Letters



Heart of the Community

Western Springs Community Primary School

Western Springs Community Primary School, School Road, Rugeley WS15 2PD
Tel: 01889 221890 E-mail: office@westernsprings.staffs.sch.uk
www.westernsprings.staffs.sch.uk
Acting Headteacher Mrs R Willington

Parent/Guardian of *INSERT NAME OF CHILD*
INSERT HOME ADDRESS

Date *INSERT DATE OF LETTER*

Dear Parent,

Termly Pupil Attendance Checks

Here at Western Springs Primary School we place a high priority on pupil attendance and punctuality. Regular attendance at school is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum to enable pupils to reach their potential.

We use a colour code system to make things easier to understand:

Outstanding Attendance	100%	0 days absence	Gives a child the very best chance of success.
Satisfactory Attendance	95%	Less than 10 days of absence	Few interruptions to learning – a good chance of success.
Worrying Attendance	Between 90-95%	Between 10-18 days of absence	Your child has missed 3 weeks of learning and their attendance is now being monitored.
Serious Concern	90% or less	19 days or more	Your child is now defined as a 'Persistent Absentee' pupil by the Department for Education. It is less likely that good progress in learning is being made as at least four weeks' learning is being lost in the year. Your child's attendance is now being closely monitored and if it does not improve you are at risk of being fined.

We are writing to inform you that your child's current attendance is: **INSERT % ATTENDANCE**

This percentage is *OUTSTANDING/SATISFACTORY/WORRYING/ A SERIOUS CONCERN*.

Thank you for your continuing support.

Yours sincerely

Mrs R Willington
Headteacher

APPENDIX F – Attendance below 95% Letter



Heart of the Community

Western Springs Community Primary School

Western Springs Community Primary School, School Road, Rugeley WS15 2PD
Tel: 01889 221890 E-mail: office@westernsprings.staffs.sch.uk
www.westernsprings.staffs.sch.uk
Acting Headteacher Mrs R Willington

Date

Dear Parent/Carer of *INSERT NAME*,

Your child's attendance is of the utmost importance in order to give them the best opportunity to achieve their full potential. Unbroken attendance at school is important for learning and although there will be times when absence is unavoidable, we stress that an attendance level of below 95% is considered worrying attendance.

It has been recorded that your child's attendance is currently at *INSERT ATTENDANCE %*.

I am sure you will agree that this level of absence will be impacting your child's studies. Therefore, we will be monitoring your child's attendance over the coming weeks and hope to see an improvement.

Please be aware that:

- When children are absent from school, they can easily fall behind with their learning
- Absence can cause problems with friendship groups and self-confidence
- All holidays count as absence and holidays taken early in Autumn term or during school assessment or examination times are particularly disruptive to a child's education
- If your child is often absent due to illness, we may be able to give extra support or take advice from the School Medical Service

If you wish to discuss any attendance matters, please call the school office on 01889 221890 to make arrangements to speak with a member of senior school staff.

Yours sincerely

Mrs R Willington
Headteacher

APPENDIX G – Attendance below 90% Letter



Heart of the Community

**Western Springs Community
Primary School**

Western Springs Community Primary School, School Road, Rugeley WS15 2PD
Tel: 01889 221890 E-mail: office@westernsprings.staffs.sch.uk
www.westernsprings.staffs.sch.uk
Acting Headteacher Mrs R Willington

Date

Dear Parent/Carer of *INSERT NAME*,

Your child's attendance is of the utmost importance in order to give them the best opportunity to achieve their full potential. Unbroken attendance at school is important for learning and although there will be times when absence is unavoidable, we stress that an attendance level of below 90% is a serious cause for concern.

Further to our previous letter which outlined your child's attendance, we have continued to monitor your child's attendance closely.

Your child's attendance is now currently at%

Therefore, we would like to take the opportunity to invite you into school to discuss your child's attendance. This will enable us to support you to ensure that we see an improvement in your child's attendance figures.

An appointment has been made for you to meet with at on

Should you be unable to make this appointment, then please contact the school office on 01889 221890 to arrange an alternative appointment.

Yours sincerely

Mrs R Willington
Headteacher