

WEAVERHAM FOREST PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE STATEMENT OF PRACTICE

1. Principles

A child should come to school every day.

A child should only be absent if the reason is unavoidable. Allowing a child to be absent without good reason is against the law and parents can be prosecuted.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about each absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings and or afternoons, away from school for a good reason, e.g. illness or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider reasonable and for which no request for absence has been granted. These include:

1. Keeping the child off school for trivial reasons
2. Truancy
3. Absences that have never been properly explained.

Providing a note may not be sufficient reason if the reason given is not 'unavoidable'. Children should never be kept off school for reasons such as shopping, minding the house, caring for younger children or as a treat.

Attendance at school must be recorded in the attendance register, which is marked in the classroom at the start of each morning and afternoon.

Maintaining the register is important for safety reasons so as to know which children are on site in the event of a fire or other emergency. A record is kept in the school office of the arrival of a children after the register has been taken and the signing in and out book must be filled in when children leave school during the day for illness, appointments etc.

Local Education Authorities have a duty to enforce school attendance. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO), employed by Cheshire West works jointly with the school and families to resolve attendance issues. The EWO routinely monitors all school attendance registers.

The school monitors attendance and lateness. Where there are attendance problems the school may contact parents about this, the school may also refer the child to the EWO.

The EWO will try to resolve the difficulties by agreement, but if other ways of trying to improve a child's attendance have failed, the EWO can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an education supervision order on the child.

Parents may wish to contact the EWO themselves for advice. The EWO is independent of the school and the telephone number can be obtained from the school office or from the Local Education Authority.

2. Procedures

The school applies the following procedures:

a. Illness and Other legitimate Reasons

If a child is unfit for school, parents should contact the school at the earliest opportunity on the first day, in person or by telephone (010606 288050) or text using School Comms. A note explaining the absence will be placed in the register.

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time.

Absence may be authorised in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments arranged in school time providing an appropriate explanation is received.

When telephone or personal messages are received absence slips are completed in the office and put in the register so that the correct absence can be recorded.

Sickness '48 hour rule'

From time to time children are sick (vomit) either at home or at school. Unfortunately it is not possible to distinguish between the causes, and therefore it is essential that the same rule of exclusion applies in all cases of vomiting or Diarrhoea.

In the Health Protection Agency document, "Guidelines for the Control of Infection and Communicable Disease in School and Early Years Settings", the guidance is:

Diarrhoea and Vomiting exclusion

Diarrhoea and/or vomiting commonly affects children and staff and can be caused by a number of different germs, including viruses, parasites and bacteria. Infections can be easily spread from person to person (by unwashed hands), especially in children. In general, it is recommended that any staff member or child with diarrhoea and/or vomiting symptoms must stay away or be excluded from the school or early years setting until they have been free of symptoms for 48 hours (the '48 hour rule') and feel well. Personal hygiene whilst ill must be very strict.

If your child is sick at school, we will ask you or your emergency contact to take your child home. They should not return for 48 hours. We appreciate that this is inconvenient in many cases, and you may not believe your child is ill, but you will appreciate that we do this in all cases and it should reduce the risk of infection for all children in school. As an example, if your child is sick at lunchtime on a Tuesday, they should not return to school until after lunch on Thursday, provided there have not been any further episodes of vomiting.

Thank you for your understanding with this. Further guidance on infection control may be found on the Health Protection Agency website.

b. Holidays

See the Weaverham Cluster Leave of Absence Policy for further guidance.

c. Punctuality / Lateness

Children must attend school on time in order to receive their full education entitlement.

Parents are expected to ensure that children are present at registration

- Registers are technically 'open' until 9.30 a.m. If a child arrives after the register has been taken but before 9.30 they are recorded as 'Late' (L).
- The register is closed at 9.30 a.m. Arrival after this time is recorded as 'Unauthorised' (U)

- In the case of repeated 'Late' or 'Unauthorised' absences, we will speak with the parents and advise them of the following – 10 occasions in a term of arriving after the close of register without a valid reason, the Education Welfare Officer will issue a letter of notice. This will lead to a period of close scrutiny. (15 days) Any 'Late' or 'Unauthorised' absence can invoke a £50 fine per parent. After this period, the school will continue to work closely with the EWO and the same penalties will apply.

4. Summary

The school has a duty to provide a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum for all pupils. Parents have a duty to ensure that children attend school regularly and arrive on time. The school is committed to working with parents to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Information on each individual child's attendance is included in the child's school report at the end of every year.