

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Weaver Primary School 2024/25



Policy Date:	September 2024
Review Date:	September 2025
SignedC Johnson.....	
PositionHead teacher.....	



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Weaver Primary School 2024/25

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

This policy has been written with the 'Working Together to Improve School attendance Guidance 2022' in mind.

Roles and responsibilities

The school has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework. The school governors have delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy to the headteacher.

The headteachers role and responsibility is to:

- Devise and review the school Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Set and review the school level targets for attendance and punctuality
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across its staff
- Implement and manage this policy, day to day, determining local processes and systems appropriate to context
- Appoint a member of the school admin team to the attendance officer role
- Ensure all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures

- Ensure that every pupil accesses their full entitlement to high quality education and acting as early as possible to address patterns of absence
- Monitor the school's offer to ensure the delivery of a curriculum which is engaging and personalised to the needs of the pupils
- Develop and maintain a positive culture across the school where all staff understand the link between behaviour, attendance, and inclusion
- Evaluate and report attendance and punctuality, via reports from the attendance officer responsible for attendance, using this to develop strategic plans for improvement, reporting actions and impact to the school and the governors as required
- Ensure that staff receive effective, targeted attendance training dependent on role
- Determine, in collaboration with the staff member responsible for attendance, whether to authorise any proposed absences during term time requested on the school's official request form (Appendix B)
- Lead pastoral / attendance review meetings and develop an attendance improvement plan involving the child, parent/carer and, where appropriate, other agencies for pupils whose patterns of absence / punctuality are a concern.

The Governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role
- Regularly reviewing attendance data
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the School Complaints Procedures
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when considering absences

Staff are responsible for:

- Developing and maintaining a positive culture where all pupils are effectively supported
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently
- Upholding and reinforcing expectations for good attendance and punctuality
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be reported
- Completing registers on time and accurately
- Communicating effectively with parents/carers regarding concerns at the earliest point, working together to eliminate barriers
- Identifying absence trends or concerns and raise with the relevant member of administration team/staff

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- The school's attendance officer is LOUISE BARTRAM , and can be contacted via admin@weaver.cheshire.sch.uk Staff and parents will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

- Communicating with pupils and parents about attendance
- Ensuring attendance is recorded accurately and promptly on SIMS/WONDE and where absence is recorded as unexplained in the school attendance register, the correct code is inputted as soon the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 working days after the session
- Contacting parents/carers of pupils who have been identified as at-risk or have persistent poor attendance, to challenge absences and encourage an early return to school
- Complying with the Department for Education Statutory Guidance on Children Missing Education (CME) by informing the local authority of the details of children who are regularly absent, missing from school following a leave of absence and prior to removing a child from the roll of the school
- Checking registers are completed
- Ensuring that attendance data is submitted to the LA/DFE
- Making 'first day' telephone calls and follow up attendance calls

Parents are responsible for:

Legal Duty

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on parents/carers to ensure children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special needs the child may have. Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

- A parent/carer who fails to ensure that their child attends school regularly is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.
- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details
- Providing the school with a minimum of TWO up to date home and emergency contact details
- Updating the school if their details change
- Ensuring their child attends every day school is open except when a statutory reason applies
- Ensuring their child arrives in school **on time** and prepared for the day
- Contacting the school as soon as possible to notify of absence
- Contacting the school to discuss any emerging concerns / barriers that might prevent their child from maintaining good attendance or arriving promptly .
- Proactively engaging with attendance support offered to prevent the need for more formal support when applicable.
- Submitting in writing, requests for exceptional leave of absence in good time to the head teacher prior to making any arrangements. **Retrospective requests will not be authorised unless in exceptional circumstances**
- Providing medical evidence for an absence when requested by the school
- Ensuring that all appointments, where possible, are arranged outside the school day

PLEASE NOTE: holidays are not deemed exceptional circumstances and will not be authorised.

Attendance Matters

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The opening and closing times are as follows:

Children enter school premises: 8.40am

Open : 8.45am

Closing 3.15pm

Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absences :

- An absence caused by genuine illness for which the school has granted leave NB the school reserves the right to ask for medical evidence of an illness as stated by the parent/carers
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during the school day, for which the leave has been granted
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency/bereavement
- Situations where the school authorises absence, e.g. special occasions such as theatre/sporting/musical performance

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Absences that have not been approved following a parents/carers request
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children (including siblings), birthdays, wellbeing days, sleeping in, no transport etc
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- No school uniform
- Leaving school for no reason during the day unnecessarily

It is the responsibility of the headteacher, not the parent/carer, to decide whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Such decisions will be made in accordance with government regulations and guidance.

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Severe Absence (SA):

- Missing 50 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

An **attendance** rate of 95% is generally considered good; this allows for children to miss 9.5 days across the **school** year. **Persistent absence** (PA) is defined as an **attendance** rate of 90% or below. Persistent absence will be followed up whatever the cause. A 90% attendance rate means that pupils have missed 19 days of school in one academic year.

Severe absence is defined as missing 50 % of school time.

The school attendance target and expectation for attendance is 97%+.

All 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, please contact the school and we will do our best to support the pupil. This may be something simple, like a 'meet and greet' system each morning to allay any anxiety.

Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days (about 1 and a half weeks) or more where they have been unable to contact the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence, to the Attendance and Children Out of School Service'(ACOSS). In our school we use a private Attendance Officer to undertake 'door knocks'. The officer's name is **Pam Prince from Education Welfare Management Ltd.**

REGISTERS

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day. At The Weaver morning registers are taken at 8.45am. After lunch, registers are taken again at 1pm, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. Requests for absence in term time must be made via the absence request form, available from the office. Absences may be authorised or unauthorised depending on reasons given.

Registers will close at 9.00am, 15 minutes after the start of the school day. Anyone arriving in class after this time will be deemed as 'late'.

Absence procedures

On the first day of absence, parents/carers should telephone the school office before 8.30am to inform them of the reason for the pupil's absence and the likely duration of the absence. Personal or written communication to the school is also acceptable.

Parents/carers should then contact the school every day until the pupil returns or alternatively indicate the length of the absence and the reasons why it is known the pupil will be unable to attend e.g. recovering from an operation. In these circumstances, a 'check in' date must be agreed when the absence will be reviewed.

Where no information has been received by 9.10 am on the first day of absence, the school will telephone the home of the absent pupil to enquire regarding the absence.

The school will always follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the register
- Should no reason for absence have been ascertained, the attendance officer or another member of staff may complete a home visit to gain the reason for the absence.
- Clarify any additional contradictory information
- The staff are concerned about the pupil's absence

The school will not normally request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

When a pupil with a social worker is absent without good reason, the social worker should be informed of unauthorised absences and support improved attendance. Where schools are considering the use of legal interventions, the views of the relevant social worker should be considered although the final decision will be taken by the school in liaison with the local authority.

Where a pupil has not returned to the school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from the school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will apply to remove the pupil from school roll and inform the LA that they have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

Leave of Absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2013 prohibits the headteacher from granting leave of absence to a pupil, except where an advance application has been made by the parent/carer and the headteacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

In order to have requests for a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances to be considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing using the appropriate form (Appendix B) at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur. The form is available from the school office

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be considered. Where the absence is granted, the

headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from the school and the agreed date of return.

The headteachers' decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents and will not deny any request without good reason.

To define 'exceptional circumstances' and as a guiding principle only, the head teacher may consider if the reasons given for requesting leave are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. The following factors will also be taken into consideration when considering requests for leave of absence during term time:

- Whether the event for which leave of absence is requested can reasonably take place during school holidays
- Levels of attendance and unauthorised absence over the last 12 months
- Any leave of absence taken previously
- If there is an attendance action plan in place
- If a FPN has been made prior to the request
- Whether the leave is during any statutory assessment period or will result in not meeting assessment deadlines
- Age and year group of the pupil

Leave in term time will only be granted where there are exceptional circumstances and in writing to the Headteacher. At Weaver Primary School, exceptional circumstances mean:

- Enforced holiday leave (Company letter to be provided by the employer of the parent requesting absence)
- Exceptional circumstances agreed by the School Governors eg terminal or long term illness of parent or child (as holidays may have to be taken around medication, medical appointments / operations)
- SEN/ medical grounds when it would be supportive for children or families to take holidays at less busy times (when supported by a recognised and legitimate medical or SEN diagnosis), when a sibling or carer needs respite or when it would be beneficial to the mental health of a pupil. These requests will be sanctioned by the headteacher but there is no right to expect this leave.
- One day authorised for the wedding or funeral of a close family member. Travel time will not be authorised eg weddings abroad.

The school **will not** consider the following to be exceptional circumstances, please note this list is not exhaustive:

- The availability of cheap holidays
- The availability of the desired accommodation
- An overlap at the beginning or end of the school term
- The working pattern or availability of parental holiday entitlement

- Visiting relatives either abroad or in the UK
- Weddings/funerals requiring more than the one day approved absence eg taking place abroad or away

Parents/carers are not entitled to remove children from school for holidays during term time. If leave of absence is not granted, taking a pupil out of the school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice.

Should a leave of absence be granted, regulations are clear that any lateness in the return to the school from the granted period, may be recorded as unauthorised leave of absence.

If a parent does not apply for leave but we believe that the pupil has been taken on holiday, then we will write to the parent to express our concern. The parent will be expected to provide contrary evidence to be received at the school by a specified date. Should the supporting documentation not be provided then the absence will be coded as unauthorised leave of absence, and the relevant procedures will be applied.

The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Legal Interventions

Where there is persistent unauthorised absence, despite support being provided, and all avenues being exhausted, then the attendance officer will provide appropriate records to the Local Authority for them to fulfil their statutory functions should their threshold be met. The Local Authority will make the decision on which, if any, response will be issued. These include:

- **Penalty Notices:** Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 allows penalty notices (fines) to be issued to parents/carers. They are an alternative measure to the prosecution of parents/carers who fail to ensure that their child attends school. A penalty notice will be issued by the local authority in line with its code of conduct when a child's absence has not been authorised by the school. This is issued to any adult with parental responsibility for each child. The penalty is £120 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to £180 per parent/carer per child if paid between 21 and 28 days. If one or both parents/carers fail to pay the penalty notice in full, then the local authority may decide to prosecute the parents/carers
- **Prosecution:** If a child fails to attend school regularly at which they are registered then the parents/carers may be guilty of an offence and may be prosecuted by the local authority. They have the power to prosecute parents/carers who fail to comply with a school attendance order under section 443 of the Education Act 1996 or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The fines available to the courts if the parents/carers are found guilty could be between £1000 and £2500. The courts can also sentence parents/carers for imprisonment for up to 3 months
- **Education Supervision Order (ESO):** This is an action plan that would be overseen by the high or

Family Court. Non-compliance with the directions given in an ESO can lead to a fine of up to £1000

- **Parenting Order:** The order requires a parent to comply with the arrangements specified in the order by the Court which can include a requirement for parents to attend counselling or guidance sessions (e.g. parenting education or parenting support classes) where they will receive help and support to enable them to improve their child's attendance for up to 3 months. Any breach of the order can lead to a fine of up to £1000

Fixed penalty notices

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

It is important to work with parents and carers to support good attendance so that legal measures will not be necessary. In this school attendance is high. To support families and to create an ethos of excellent attendance **the school will:**

Expect: Pupils are expected to attend school and attendance is expected to be high. We expect attendance to be above 97%

Monitor: Attendance will be monitored rigorously and under attendance questioned and highlighted. Reasons for under attendance will also be monitored to check for patterns. Monitoring takes place formally with the ACOSS team every term but informally in school every half-term.

Listen and Understand: The school will listen to difficulties and issues surrounding poor attendance and work with the parents to promote and achieve better outcomes.

Support: We will support parents to get pupils to school on time and for a high level of attendance to become the norm. This may be through a family support plan, an early help plan, family support worker or the involvement of the Attendance and Children Out of School Service team who will meet with families.

Formal support: Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, the school will work with the ACOSS team to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is in place to enable families to respond.

Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order

Enforce: Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, we will enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

According to the Department for Education guidelines, there are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

We will offer support to these pupils and families to help maintain a good level of attendance whilst helping them to understand that attendance at school is compulsory.

WEAVER ATTENDANCE POLICY 2024/5

Appendix A

Attendance Codes

Colour Key

Colour	Description
	Present
	Authorised Absence
	Approved Educational Activity - Counted as Present
	Unauthorised Absence
	Not Counted in Attendance Calculations

Attendance codes

Register Code	Description
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
L	Late (before registers closed) marked as present
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
C	Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
E	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made
I	Illness (NOT appointments)
M	Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments
R	Authorised absence due to religious observance

S	Authorised absence due to study leave
T	Authorised absence due to traveller absence

J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
B	Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site (NOT dual registration)
P	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity
V	Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip
W	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending work experience
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
G	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, NOT agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday
N	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided
O	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed
D	Dual registered (at another establishment - NOT counted in possible attendance)
X	Not required to be in school - for non-compulsory school age children
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances
#	Planned whole or partial school closure - NOT counted in possible attendances
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements

Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause



WEAVER PRIMARY SCHOOL REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

DfE regulation amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence (holiday) during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The amendments give parents no entitlement to take their child out of school for a holiday in term time. The Headteacher and the Governing Body will determine what the exceptional circumstances are.

FOR COMPLETION BY PARENT/CARER

You have requested the school's permission for leave of absence to be taken during term time. Before such authorisation is considered please complete the form below and return to the School Office. Completion of the form does not guarantee the leave of absence will be authorised.

Pupil's Name: _____ Class: _____

Dates of Leave of Absence: From: _____ To: _____

Please give full reason(s) for asking for leave of absence in term time

Signed: _____ (Parent/Carer) Date: _____

It is important to have read and understood the school's policy on attendance.

FOR COMPLETION BY THE SCHOOL :

☐

Authorised

**REGISTER
CODE C**

☐

Unauthorised

**REGISTER
CODE G**

Reason holiday declined :

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Reply letter (Orange)



**WEAVER PRIMARY
SCHOOL
WESTERN AVENUE
NANTWICH
CHESHIRE
CW5 7AJ**



***Headteacher
Mrs Charlotte Johnson***

Tel: 01270 626335

e-mail: head@weaver.cheshire.sch.uk

(2025)

Dear

Pupil's Name:

I am writing in response to your request for Leave of Absence in term time for the above named child for the following period;_____.

Following changes in regulations, Leave of Absence may only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. As your request does not meet the criteria for exceptional circumstances in this instance, I am unable to authorise your request for leave for this period.

If you continue with your plans, and take your child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. As such the school will inform the Local Authority and a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued. Failure to pay the penalty fine, within the required time, may result in prosecution.

Please refer to the chart overleaf for details of the FPN process including fines and timelines.

Yours sincerely,

**Mrs Charlotte Johnson
Headteacher**

FPN Request (Red)



**WEAVER PRIMARY
SCHOOL
WESTERN AVENUE
NANTWICH
CHESHIRE
CW5 7AJ**



***Headteacher
Mrs Charlotte Johnson***

Tel: 01270 626335

e-mail: head@weaver.cheshire.sch.uk

[2025]

Dear

Pupil's Name:

Further to my letter of _____, as you decided to take the
unauthorised Leave of Absence for the following period; _____

___ the school will be informing the Local Authority who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a FPN is issued, failure to pay the penalty fine, within the required time, may result in prosecution.

Please refer to the chart overleaf for details of the FPN process including fines and timelines.

Yours sincerely,

**Mrs Charlotte Johnson
Headteacher**

Weaver Primary School Attendance Action Plan 2024/5

Target	Success criteria	Tasks	By whom	By when	Comment
Improve daily attendance rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily attendance rises from 94% to of 97% Attendance stays above national target of 95% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform parents of new attendance target for the school Monitor the attendance of each cohort weekly Daily phone call to families to establish reason for non-attendance Follow up calls over the week ‘Warn and inform’ letters sent to pupils nearing the 90% attendance rate Holidays in term time not authorised Attendance awards attendance mentions in assemblies each half term for 100% attendance Attendance will feature in every parent teacher conversation 	HT	Dec 24	Target achieved – attendance regularly above 97.5%

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent absence rate lowers from 16% to prepandemic rate and is below national (13%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent absence in every cohort analysed • Warn and inform letters to sent to parents of pupils whose attendance has 	Admin/HT	Dec 2024	Not fully achieved – still a number of pupils missing 10% of education due to
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • neared the 90% level or fallen below • ACOSS team informed -action plans and FSW visits applied • FPN issued for those missing more than 10 sessions withing two consecutive half term periods Early help assessments undertaken to establish reasons for non-attendance and to support attendance • School doctor/ nursing service used to support families 			illness, anxiety, holiday.
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Improve attendance for targeted absentee pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The attendance rate for pupils within a vulnerable group is the same as for others at 97% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early help assessments undertaken to establish reasons for non-attendance and to support attendance School doctor/ nursing service used to support families especially around illness / medical conditions Reasons for absence monitored for patterns Days of absence monitored for patterns 		Dec 2024	
Reduce number of late marks on school - registers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of late marks on the school register reduces from 0.4 % 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual pupil data analysed each half term – ‘late letters’ issued Profile of each cohort analysed are there any year group patterns? Parents frequently reminded by newsletters School gate closing at 8.50 parents to bring pupils to the school office after this time Individual 		Dec 2024	

		parents called to discuss lateness			
Ensure high attendance for all vulnerable groups	Pupil attendance increases for SEN pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance for all vulnerable groups analysed and acted upon 			