



Water Mill Primary School

Attendance Policy

Updated: April 2025

Introduction

Water Mill Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. We recognise that attending school regularly is fundamental to helping children make the most of their learning opportunities by fostering emotional resilience, confidence, and essential life skills and empowering pupils to be successful at school.

We understand that some pupils may face challenges in maintaining regular attendance. This policy outlines our approach to working collaboratively with pupils, parents, and external partners to promote, support, and facilitate regular attendance while addressing any barriers that may arise.

Aims

- To set clear expectations and aspirations that all pupils have a high standard of school attendance and punctuality
- To support children's attainment through good attendance
- To make attendance a priority for everyone
- To ensure there is a clear process to identify and address emerging attendance concerns
- To work effectively with parents, pupils, and partners through building trusted relationships to work together to remove barriers to attendance.

Expectations for Attendance

- Pupils are expected to attend school every day unless they are ill or have an authorised reason for absence
- Our Leadership Team monitors lateness and will discuss this with individual families if this becomes a concern
- The school office must be contacted on the first day of every absence by 9.00am stating the reason for the absence and the likely return date
- Take your child to the doctor if they are unwell and provide the school with

medical evidence (e.g. an appointment card, doctor's note, copy of prescription or hospital letter) The Head Teacher will not authorise medical absences without evidence.

- A religious observance - absence may be authorised, for one day on each occasion, for pupils to attend relevant religious observances. For example: we will authorise one day for a child whose family are celebrating Eid when this falls during term time.

Expectations for Punctuality

- Parents/guardians must ensure their child attends school regularly and on time. School gates open at 8.40am each morning and class lessons start at 8.45am. The gates close at 8.50am. A late register will be taken from 8.50am.
- If a child is late on five occasions, they will receive a late letter. If lateness reaches 10 occasions, parents will be invited into school to discuss how we can support families to ensure children are in school on time.

Authorised Illness Absence

We will authorise absence for:

Vomiting & Diarrhoea

Children with diarrhoea and/or a vomiting bug should stay off school until 48 hours after their symptoms have gone.

Temperature

If your child has a raised temperature, they shouldn't attend school. They can return as soon as they feel better.

Infectious Diseases

If your child has a rash, check with your GP or practice nurse before sending them to school.

Please follow the link for more information about how to decide whether your child is well enough to attend school:

<https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Yourchildatschool/Pages/Illness.aspx>

Unauthorised Illness Absence

Absences for minor illnesses such as a mild stomach ache, headache, cough, or cold will not be authorised.

If you're unsure, send your child to school and notify their teacher or the school office so we can monitor them. At the end of the day, the teacher will update you on how your child has felt throughout the day.

If your child becomes too unwell to stay in school, we will contact you.

Illness and Healthcare Appointments

Parents/guardians will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents are responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Leave of Absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. To have requests for a leave of absence considered, parents/guardians should contact the head teacher in writing 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. Supporting evidence should be provided with the request. 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 head teacher will outline the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school will not grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. 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.

How does your child compare?

At Water Mill, we have set an attendance target of 97%.

Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning and can seriously disadvantage your child in adult life.

Attendance during one school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons

Rewards and Incentives

We celebrate good attendance by:

- Awarding certificates for high attendance each half term
- Acknowledging and rewarding most improved attendance

- Half termly attendance reward events (e.g. popcorn parties, bouncy castles, film events)
- Extra weekly P.E session for the class with the highest attendance (above 95%)
- Termly raffle prize for high attendance (Amazon voucher for parents)
- Recognition for children who have had 100% attendance during the whole academic year

Acceptable attendance percentages:

100% attendance since September					
or					
Autumn 1: 100%	Autumn 2: 99%	Spring 1: 98.5%	Spring 2: 98%	Summer 1: 97.5%	Summer 2: 97%

Legislation and Statutory Interventions

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (section 444(1)) to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the Education Authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines "parent" to include:

all natural parents, whether they are married or not; and any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education that is suitable for their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

Parents are responsible for ensuring their children receive education. Each situation must be dealt with on an individual basis, always remembering the welfare and safety of the child is the paramount concern. Where a registered child is not attending school, this will be reported to the Local Authority by the school.

Promoting Attendance and Preventing Absence

Our school procedures follow a support first model expectations set out by the Department for Education in the guidance Working Together to improve school attendance (September 2024).

Our procedures are based around the principles and stages of:

- Preventing poor attendance
- Implementation of clear recording of attendance on school registers

- Early intervention and Early Help to address early patterns of poor attendance and agree ways to improve
- Targeted interventions (including Early Help and Formal interventions) for those children who are persistently absent or severely absent
- Understanding barriers to individuals' attendance and agreeing individual plans for children with specific needs
- Regular review of attendance data to identify children whose attendance is declining and any concerning patterns of attendance
- Support for parents and carers to address any in-school barriers to attendance and signposting to external support agencies

If, following early intervention and support, attendance does not improve, the school will seek the advice and support of the Attendance Team in Birmingham and will follow Birmingham City Council's Fast Track to Attendance procedures. These can be found at:

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50157/education_legal_intervention_referral/690/pupil_attendance_advice_for_schools_and_professionals

Penalty Notice Regulations 2024 and Statutory Guidance (as outlined by Birmingham City Council)

Schools must consider whether a penalty notice (fine) is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold of 10 unauthorised absences in a rolling 10-week period. Prior to referral, support should be offered in any case where support is appropriate using the Birmingham Support First Model (this does not apply to leave of absence).

If the school considers that the trigger has been met and a penalty notice is appropriate, they will refer to the Local Authority in line with the Local Authority Code of Conduct.

- If the Local authority issues a penalty notice it is per parent per child. The first penalty notice issued to a parent will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- If the threshold is met a second time in three years and a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in relation to the same child – this will be 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.

Please follow the link for more information about school attendance and advice for parents:

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20014/schools_and_learning/1502/school_attendance_advice_for_parents/4

If you are having any difficulties with school attendance or punctuality, or need support, please contact one of the following members of staff on 0121 464 7769:

Mrs. Rudd (Head Teacher):	Mr. Hill (Head Teacher):	Miss Potter (Assistant Head Teacher and Attendance Lead)	Mrs. Hoyer (Assistant Head Teacher and SENCO)	Zoe Lynch (School Attendance Officer)
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