



Wainstalls School

Attendance Policy

“Together We Can”

Rationale

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age (5 years old) shall cause him/ her to receive efficient full-time education ... either by regular school attendance or otherwise.” (Education Act 1996).

Regular attendance is vitally important to ensure that our pupils take full advantage of the excellent educational opportunities available to them and to ensure that they are able to reach their full potential. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from the fantastic learning experiences that Wainstalls School provides, it is vital that parents ensure that their child attends regularly and arrives at school, on time, every day that the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage, with evidence to show that in some cases it can also result in pupils being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. In addition, pupil's absences also disrupts teaching routines so may also detrimentally affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of parents, and permitting absence from the school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Wainstalls School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, where each member of the school community feels happy and secure. All school staff will work together with pupils and their families to ensure pupils attend school regularly and punctually, with our DDSL, being responsible for closely monitoring attendance and punctuality throughout school.

The school has established systems of incentives and rewards which acknowledge the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping, and will challenge the behaviour of pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

The school will ensure that all pupils and parents are provided with information, advice and support to help meet these objectives.

Aims

In order to improve the overall attendance of pupils in school we aim:

- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with Wainstalls School, including pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents/carers and pupils.
- To agree roles and responsibilities to ensure consistency in dealing with all matters relating to attendance and punctuality.
- To develop a comprehensive system for collecting and analysing attendance related data.
- To implement a consistent system of rewards and sanctions.
- To recognise and address the needs of individual pupils returning to school following significant periods of absence.
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- To develop effective partnerships with supporting services and agencies within the Local Authority.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us by telephoning the school on 01422 244804 **before 8.30am** on the first day of absence and continue to keep us informed or email admin@wainstalls.org
- Or call into school and report to reception. If your child is absent and we have not heard from you, as a matter of safety we will implement the First Day Calling Protocol:

First Day Calling Protocol and Procedure

- 1) Class registers taken and saved by 8.40am.
- 2) Late children checked against registers, checks made with class teacher and office emails checked by Mrs Arber and Mrs Harvey up to 9:00am.
- 3) Mrs Arber and Mrs Harvey to check attendance.
- 5) First day phone call to the first name on contact list by 9:00am asking for response by Mrs Arber/Mrs Harvey.
- 6) Ring down contact list until reply is received, ensuring where possible that someone from outside of the family home has been contacted.
- 7) Alert a member of the DSL team immediately if child is absent and no contact has been made by 10:00am.
- 8) Home Visit made by DSL, DDSL or SLT (this will be pre-agreed with DDSL/DSL/SLT).
- 9) If no response at home, post First Day Calling notification through letter box with a time limit to contact school (11:00am).
- 10) DSL/SLT to contact Police if all the above stages have been completed and there is still no contact regarding the absent child by 11:00am. This should be done using the 101 number.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. (Section 199, Education Act 1993). Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either 'Authorised' or 'Unauthorised'. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. For children on or near the 90% threshold, which is considered to be a persistent absentee, parents will be required to produce medical evidence, or these will be recorded as unauthorised. An electronic log is maintained by the School Office for the purpose of recording pupils leaving or returning to the site.

Wainstalls School now has a responsibility to refer all unauthorised absences to the Local Authority attendance officer as is now advised by the Local Authority. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- day trips and holidays in term time.
- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- truancy before or during the school day.
- absences which have never been properly explained.
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.

Holidays in Term Time

We strongly discourage parents from taking their children on holiday during term time. Taking holidays in term time will detrimentally affect your child's academic and pastoral progress as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. From 1st September 2013 the Education Regulations changed, 'Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted'.

All applications for leave under exceptional circumstances must be made in advance and will be considered by the Principal, in consultation with Governors where appropriate. In making a decision, the Principal will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous patterns of leave in term time.

The exceptional circumstances under which leave may be authorised include:

- Illness of a close relative living at some distance
- Bereavement
- Inability of parent to take holidays because of special duties e.g. police/armed forces.

Even when exceptional circumstances do occur, we may still refuse to authorise leave in term time:

- When a child's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a child's attendance rate is already 95% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.
- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A child who only attends school for 90% or less of the time is classed as a Persistent Absentee. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and the school will take robust action in addressing this issue. We monitor all absence thoroughly and any cases that are seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark (below 93%), are given priority, parents will be informed immediately and a meeting will be requested to explore ways of improving attendance. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our DSL team and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. All PA cases are also automatically referred to our DSL team and to the Local Authority.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and Wainstalls School actively discourages lateness as it can significantly disrupt lessons for all. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss vital introductory work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting important information and news for the day. Late arriving children also disrupt lessons, this can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage further absence.

- School doors will open at 8.30am when the school day begins.
- Morning registers will be closed at 8.40am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.
- External doors will be closed at 8.35 am and children arriving after this time should enter through the main entrance where they will be recorded as arriving late.
- Registers will also be taken at the beginning of the afternoon session.
- It is the responsibility of parents to contact the school before school starts or at the latest by 9.00am if their child will not be attending school that day.
- Mrs Harvey or Mrs Arber will attempt to contact the parents of absentees, after 9am, where the reason for absence is not known. This is primarily to ensure that parents are aware that their child is not in school but also to establish the reason for absence.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community - parents, children and all members of the school staff. The school has targets to improve and maintain attendance rates and children and parents have an important part to play in meeting these targets. The national attendance target is 96%, but at Wainstalls School, we aim for a target of 97%.

To support this we will:

- Celebrate good attendance throughout school.
- Apply the School Attendance Policy consistently.
- Keep pupils informed about levels of attendance by awarding the class with the highest weekly attendance with an Attendance award in Rewards Assembly.
- Share class and whole school attendance figures with parents in weekly newsletters.
- Make attendance a high priority, through attendance displays/records in the Hall and on classroom doors.
- Formally report children's attendance and punctuality rates on school reports.
- Award children with 100% attendance for each term with a certificate and for the whole school year, a certificate and prize.
- Provide clear information for parents about attendance and punctuality (Attendance Matters).
- Involve parents at the earliest stage when there are concerns about a pupil's attendance.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

Where there are issues and concerns regarding the attendance of a child, the school will pro-actively implement a variety of incentives to support the child and family to improve the pupil's attendance.

- Meetings with parents to discuss strategies in school and at home which encourage regular school attendance and the production of an action plan for improving attendance, which may include collecting the children for an agreed period of time or when individual needs arise.
- Consideration of timetable variations and subject choice with regard to engaging the pupil.
- DSL team to build positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Use of Peer Mentors to provide a social support network.
- Use of methods for discouraging absence (i.e. placing the pupil on report, letters home).
- Extra support/tuition for the pupil to catch up with work missed.
- In-school counselling.
- Multi-agency meetings will be arranged as appropriate if there are underlying factors that are causing poor attendance.
- Absence logs will be monitored by the DSL team/Administrative Assistant to establish trends in individual absence and target effective action.
- All attendance data will be collated and analysed weekly, termly and annually to establish trends and to provide reports to Governors, the Local Authority and DfE.
- The school will be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of pupils returning to school after significant periods of absence, a reintegration plan will be agreed and shared with pupil, parents and staff and peer support and mentoring used if appropriate.

Where intervention at school-level fails to ensure an improvement in a child's school attendance, a referral to the Education Welfare Service will be made, with our DSL team liaising with the Educational Welfare Officer assigned to the case.

In cases where attendance concerns have not been addressed a meeting will be arranged, with the school's governor who monitors attendance present, and an attendance contract will be agreed upon and signed by the parents.

Where intervention at the school-level fails to bring about an improvement in school attendance and at the discretion of the Principal, it is also now possible for parents to be issued penalty notices for unauthorised absences. Penalty notices begin with an initial fine of £80, rising to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Following failure of these payments, the local attendance officer may decide to prosecute a parent. If so, parents can be fined up to £2,500, imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly, or be given a community order.

Wainstalls School is particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities and will provide them with additional support. Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, assessments or variable moods. But it is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly. Doing so may also serve to help with the underlying issue.

Monitoring and Evaluation

All members of the school community have a shared responsibility for effectively monitoring our children's attendance and punctuality. The DDSL, Mrs Campbell will oversee the procedures outlined and report concerns/issues to the Principal, Mrs Waugh and/or Safeguarding Team, Mrs Priestwood and Mrs Handson as appropriate. Wainstalls School is currently sharing daily attendance data with the Department for Education (DfE).

Date of implementation:	September 2025
Date of next review:	September 2026
Team responsible for writing/review:	L. Campbell DDSL (Attendance)