



Watergate School Attendance Policy

Attendance at school is a legal requirement for pupils at Watergate school who are aged five to eleven years. Our pupils are entitled to formal education during this phase of their lives. It is important that they receive their entitlement for their present and future lives.

Pupils on roll who are younger than five years old are expected to attend full time. Their place at the school is funded by the local authority. Persistent failure to attend (unauthorised absence) could result in a pupil losing their place at the school.

Pupils attending Watergate are more vulnerable and have greater needs than the majority of their mainstream counterparts. This means that some pupils may have more genuine absences from school for medical reasons. It is the school's responsibility to encourage and support regular and frequent school attendance.

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school. High priority is given to conveying to parent(s)/ carer(s) the importance of regular and punctual attendance. The school recognises that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home- school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance the school will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents/ carers to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The school adheres to Lewisham Local Authority protocols with regard to non-attendance including the issuing of penalties.

PROCEDURES

Registration

The register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording pupils attendance or absence and in the latter case if authorised or unauthorised. At Watergate an electronic registration system is used to register pupils. Once registers are complete, the information is then entered onto the school's information management system by Watergate admin staff. The morning register closes at 9.30.

Procedures for following up absence / lateness

Pupils who arrive more than 30 minutes after the beginning of registration should be marked absent for that session (i.e. half day). These absences are regarded as unauthorised absences if no satisfactory explanation is given in a note or by telephone by the parents/carers. Parents or carers dropping pupils off late must report to Reception and explain the reasons for lateness. This is also recorded in the electronic system along with the time of arrival.

It is the responsibility of the parent / carer to contact the school on the first morning of the child's absence. This can be done by leaving a message on the answer phone or phoning when the school office opens at 8.30am. A parent/ carer should contact prior to 9.15am. If this contact is not made Watergate will contact the parent/carer by telephone or, if the parent is unobtainable, send a text message or email and/or write a letter requesting information.

If this fails to provide an explanation for the absence a member of the leadership team will attempt to get in touch and a letter may be sent to the parents / carers. The school's Attendance & Welfare Officer may be informed and the parent/ carer may be invited in to the school for a meeting with a member of the leadership team and the Attendance & Welfare Officer. The meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance.

If a pupil is persistently late the school will write to parent/carer inviting them to a school-based meeting with the Attendance & Welfare Officer.

Pupil absence monitoring procedure

All absent pupils will be contacted on their first day of absence by a designated member of the administration team (admin pupils-families).

If on the first call to a pupils home no one answers, then a message/ text will be left for the family to contact the school as soon as possible to explain why the pupil is not at school.

On making contact with the pupil's family, they will be informed that for every day the pupil is absent the family must contact the school to inform them of the pupil's progress. If they do not, then the school will contact them each and every day of absence.

The daily absence monitoring form is completed by the admin team detailing reasons given for absence. This is monitored every day by the headteacher and member of the leadership team with responsibility for pupil attendance and action taken as detailed above and below, where necessary.

Authorised and unauthorised Absence

The Head teacher can only consider authorising an absence during term time where an application has been made in advance and where the headteacher is satisfied that there are exceptional or special circumstances to justify the request. The DfE now state that leave of absence requests for holidays should not be granted.

Strategies for promoting attendance / punctuality

Attendance statistics are monitored by the Head teacher and the Governing Body and reported to the local authority. A member of the leadership team will contact parents and carers to discuss any issues, which may cause a pupil to experience attendance difficulties. These will be promptly investigated by the school. The member of the leadership team with responsibility for attendance and the head teacher will have regular meetings with the Attendance & Welfare Officer, in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties. The Attendance & Welfare Officer completes regular (at least termly) register checks. Working with the school, the Attendance & Welfare Officer will send out a letter to parent(s)/ carer(s) if a child is persistently absent from school and will organise meetings with parent(s)/ carer(s) as necessary.

Sanctions for persistent lateness and Non – Attendance

The school adheres to Lewisham Local Authority protocols with regard to non-attendance including the issuing of penalties.

September 2015

May 16 update