




**WATERGATE SCHOOL**

**'I Can, You Can, Together We Will'**

# Attendance Policy

This policy was agreed by the Headteacher on: (and supersedes all previous policies relating to this area)	
Signed by:  (Headteacher)	
Implemented: February 2018 Interim update May 2019 Carolyn Vagg	
Review date: March 2023 Date of Next Review: March 2025	
Author:	



## **Attendance Policy**

This Policy has been written with reference to the Education Act 1996, and the DfE document 'School Attendance: Guidance for Schools' September 2018.

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 genuinely have a greater number of, and more prolonged, absences from school for medical reasons. The school takes seriously its responsibility to encourage and support regular and frequent school attendance. We will be alert to those critical times in a child's life – e.g. transfer to secondary school – and will put in place strategies (e.g. a comprehensive transition programme) to alleviate anxieties and enable children to maintain full attendance. If children have been absent for prolonged periods (e.g. for surgical procedures and rehabilitation), we will ensure that their re-integration into school life is carefully planned and executed and that their parents/carers are fully involved.

We are also aware that there may be other factors which discourage a child from coming to school e.g. bullying, and will always investigate fully.

All staff will be made aware of their responsibilities in monitoring a child's attendance and raising concerns at the earliest possible stage. Positive, well-established relationships between class teams and families ensures that issues arising can be addressed in an informal way at first.

Parents and carers are made aware that they are responsible for ensuring their children attend school and that only the school can authorise absence (not the parent). The importance of regular and punctual attendance is conveyed to parents as a high priority. 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. Parents will be made aware of the school's procedures for registering attendance and recoding absence.

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. We will always prioritise early intervention. Where

it is necessary we will establish clear lines of communication with outside agencies (whilst ensuring that GDPR protocols are observed).

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, which contains the personal details of every pupil. We will enter pupils to the Admission Register from the first day on which it has been agreed that the pupil shall start. The Attendance Register will be marked accurately, providing a daily record of pupils' attendance or absence and in the latter case if authorised or unauthorised.

At Watergate School an electronic registration system is used to register pupils. Once registers are complete, the information is entered onto the school's information management system by Watergate admin staff. The morning register closes at 9.30.

When a pupil moves to a new address we will record the name of the parent with whom the child will be living, the new address and the date from which the pupil will live there.

When a pupil moves to a new school we will record the name of the other school and the date on which the pupil is due to start.

A pupil will only be deleted from the Register in accordance with Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

### **Children Missing Education**

With regard to the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022' we will put in place appropriate safeguarding responses for a child who goes missing from school.

We will hold at least two emergency contact numbers for each pupil. Every year we will ask parents to review the information and the school will update accordingly. This will ensure that we have a means of contacting parents if their child is missing education.

### **Home-Educated Children**

On receipt of written notification to home-educate, Watergate will inform the pupil's local authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register. We will not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding excluding the pupil or because the pupil has a poor attendance record.

### **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 states that leave of absence requests for holidays should not be granted.

### **Strategies for promoting attendance / punctuality**

We will actively promote high levels of attendance and punctuality at Watergate School. 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 will complete 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 the current Lewisham Local Authority protocols with regard to non-attendance including the issuing of penalties.