



Leave of Absence Policy

Weaverham Cluster of Schools

Date of policy: January 2023

Date of review: January 2025

This policy was written by those leaders responsible for monitoring attendance in the Weaverham Cluster of schools and in consultation with Cheshire West and Chester Education Welfare Service (September 2013). The policy is written in line with the legislation 'The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.'

Policy Statement

All children need to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year in order to receive their educational entitlement and to make the most of that education. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. All schools within the Cluster will follow procedures that comply with the law, relevant education legislation and codes of practice, other relevant national/local requirements which aim to achieve best practice for all groups of children.

Principles

The Cluster Policy is founded on the following key principles:

- ✓ every child will have access to a full-time education to which they are entitled
- ✓ any patterns of absence will be acted upon early in collaboration with pupils, parents and the Education Welfare Service
- ✓ parents will be held accountable in performing their legal duty of ensuring that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly
- ✓ children will be punctual to lessons

Policy in Practice

Punctuality

School starts at 8:50am and all children are expected to be in school for registration at 8:50am. Children arriving after that time must come into school via the main entrance and parents must sign the Late Book stating the reason for lateness. The register is recorded at 8:50am and at 9:20am the register is closed (this is 30 minutes after registration is opened). Afternoon registration starts at 1:00pm and closes at 1:30pm.

Children arriving after close of registration without a satisfactory explanation will receive unauthorised absence mark in the register. Persistent lateness may result in the school contacting Education Welfare or Social Care.

Absence

Absence is recorded legally as ‘**authorised**’ (approved by school) or ‘**unauthorised**’ (not approved by school). Parents are required to telephone the school office by 9:15am on the first day of absence and then on all subsequent days of absence. Parents may also email the school office to report an absence or use the “Report Absence” section of the School Spider app to inform school. When school has not been informed of the reason for absence attempts will be made to contact a parent. Persistent failure to make contact with a parent may result in the school contacting Education Welfare or Social Care.

Parents requesting **Leave of Absence** for any reason (other than medical must complete the form (Appendix 1) in advance. **All leave of absence is at the Headteacher’s discretion.** In making a decision to authorise leave of absence the Headteacher will consider if the absence is due to exceptional circumstances (examples):

- ✓ the parent has leave from the **Armed Forces** (Services)
- ✓ **Family Crisis** (adoption; bereavement; additional medical needs)
- ✓ **Religious Observance** by the religious body to which the parents belong

If leave of absence is authorised, a date to return must be agreed with the Headteacher. A child who is absent for longer than the 5 days (or 10 sessions - a session being either a morning or an afternoon) after the agreed return date may be legally removed from the school register and the parent may be liable to prosecution.

Leave of Absence due to Family Holidays

Leave of absence due to a family holiday during term time will not be authorised, however, the request must still be processed by the school. In response to any leave of absence request, a decision will be made and a letter sent within 10 working days (Appendix 2).

Fixed Penalty Notice

A fixed penalty notice may be issued by the Local Authority:

- 10 unauthorised consecutive absent sessions due to a family holiday
- Where persistence absence is recorded as unauthorised

The current rates payable by parents are £60 where the amount is paid within 21 days and £120 where the amount is paid within 21-28 days. This charge is per parent/carer per child. If the fixed penalty notice remains unpaid this could lead to prosecution in the Magistrate’s Court.

| Leave of Absence Policy | |
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| Review Frequency | Two Years |
| Reviewed and Approved by | Full Governing Body |
| Date | January 23 |
| Headteacher Signature | <i>Heather Bettley</i> |
| Chair of Governors Signature | <i>Ruth Downes</i> |
| Date of Next review | January 25 |