

Welton Primary School

Attendance Policy

2016



## **Rational**

Welton Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for all.

The school strives to promote a welcoming, caring and safe environment where each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All staff will work with pupils, parents and carers to help them meet their legal responsibility, in ensuring their children attend school regularly.

The school will establish effective systems of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance.

Parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality will be challenged.

## Aims

1) To promote the highest possible levels of attendance by pupils the school will:-

- Establish attendance as high profile
- Apply the attendance policy consistently
- Monitor progress in attendance and report to the governors
- Endeavour to improve pupils punctuality
- Discourage term time holidays in accordance with the Behaviour & Attendance Partnership Policy

2) The school will make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school by:-

- Regularly reporting attendance data to the school governors
- Informing parents of school times, term dates and training days
- Having clear procedures for parents to inform staff of pupils absence or lateness
- Displaying materials promoting attendance
- Liaising with the Education Welfare Service
- Using reward systems for good/improved attendance/punctuality

3) The school will develop a frame work which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks by:-

- Identifying designated staff to be responsible for first day of absence contact
- Ensuring clearly defined late registration procedures
- Having clear procedures and records of intervention regarding attendance concerns
- Identifying designated staff to liaise with the Education Welfare Service re attendance issues
- Reviewing attendance regularly

4) The school will provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils by:-

- Highlighting attendance in PSHE, assemblies and parents meetings
- Improving communication between school and parents
- Informing parents when a pupils attendance falls below 90%
- Providing parents with accurate and up to date information
- Making staff available to speak with parents

5) The school will develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance data by:-

- Consistent use of attendance codes following LA guidance
- Identifying and collecting information on developing patterns of irregular attendance and punctuality
- Providing attendance information for the head teacher, governors, relevant staff, education welfare service and parents

6) The school will further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school by:-

- Initiating first day absence contact
- Making full use of computer generated letters
- Promoting expectation of school
- Encouraging parents to visit/communicate with the school

7) The school will use a system of rewards and sanctions by:-

- Actively promoting attendance with associated rewards and effective sanctions
- Ensuring fairness and consistent implementation of rewards and sanctions
- Working in partnership with the education welfare service, parent support advisor, behavioural support service and parents

8) The school will promote effective partnership with the education service and other key services by:-

- Ensuring the attendance register and admission details are accurate and up to date
- Carrying out initial enquiries and interventions regarding attendance issues
- Gathering and recording relevant information to refer any concerns to the education welfare service
- Identifying key staff to liaise with the education welfare service and other agencies related to attendance
- Supporting the education welfare service in the use of enforcement tools, when appropriate to do so

# Roles and Responsibilities

## Parents

- It is the legal responsibility of every parent/carer to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually
- Must contact the school without delay to report any absence
- Ensure that the school has up to date contact details
- Adhere to the schools policy with regard to holiday absence
- Ensure their children have a good attitude to learning and attendance
- Work in partnership with the school to promote the best interest of their child

## School Administration team

- To monitor attendance on a daily basis
- Ensure correct attendance codes are used
- Maintain and update all contact information
- Prepare attendance data report for the Head Teacher every half term
- Send reminder letters to parents/carers re clearing unexplained absences every half term

## Business Manager and HT

- Will prepare a weekly list of pupil's with less than 90% attendance
- Will identify and monitor pupils at risk of becoming persistent absentees, using the Sims system
- Will contact parents/carers if attendance/punctuality becomes a concern by telephone/letter
- To make first day absence telephone calls
- To send letter if no response to call
- If necessary will arrange an action plan meeting in school with parent/carers
- If parent/carer fails to attend meeting will do a home visit
- Will hold review meetings with parent/carer
- Will maintain pupil notes regarding attendance issues
- If required will make a referral to the Education Welfare Service and liaise with the Education Welfare Officer

## Class teachers

- To record accurate details of attendance at the beginning of each session.
- To mark pupils arriving during registration as L (late) and those who arrive after the register has closed (30 minutes after the start of the session) as U (unauthorised absence)
- Pass information regarding absence to the administration office
- Will speak to every pupil on returning to school about the reason for their absence to ensure they are supported and given the opportunity to catch up with missed work

- Present half termly certificates and awards

## Headteacher

- Ensure there are named key members of staff with responsibility for attendance
- Submit reports to the governing body on various aspects of pupil attendance, including measuring progress against targets
- Ensure a whole school approach to the development and implementation of the school attendance policy
- Encourage staff, including ancillary and administrative staff, to see attendance as part of their responsibility
- Offer clear guidance to parents with regard to their legal responsibilities in relation to attendance matters and information on attendance procedures
- Establish clear channels of communication between school and parents
- Chair attendance action plan meetings
- Work closely with the Education Welfare Service with regards to enforcement action

## Governing body

- The governing body is required by legislation to see that registers are kept correctly
- Are required to publish an annual report for parents which includes reference to the schools attendance figures
- Should review attendance statistics and trends and support measures to improve attendance
- Appoint a governor with specific responsibility for attendance matters and ensure this Governor is available to attend meetings with parents

## Education Welfare Service

- An area Education Welfare Officer will advise on policy, strategies and legal requirements
- The area Education Welfare Officer will advise in identifying attendance concerns and becoming familiar with the procedures and documentation required for referring attendance concerns to the Education Welfare Service
- The allocated Education Welfare Officer will liaise with school staff following referral to the service

## Conclusion

All staff will be made fully aware of this policy and it will be applied fairly and consistently to all pupils. It is designed to be a useful living document and will be the subject of a regular review.

## Other Relevant Policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Policy (included below)

## Date of Policy/Review:

January 2017 – to be reviewed annually

# Welton Primary School

## Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Policy

2016



## Background

Schools are required to provide education for 190 days a year and it is expected that children who are registered at a school will attend for this time. Parents do not have an automatic right for their children to have time off school and any requests for absence are entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Research shows that children do not achieve as well in their education and in public examinations the more school absence they have, for example a child absent from school for a period of two weeks each year, for exceptional circumstances and with the average absence for illness may miss the equivalent of one whole year's education over their school life.

## General Principles

The following general principles underpin this policy:

- (i) The principles of honesty, openness, transparency and the spirit of co-operation underpin the policy.
- (ii) All schools within the East Riding that have adopted this policy agree to follow it through to penalty notice if appropriate. This will ensure that the policy is applied in a consistent manner and provides equity for all parents and schools.
- (iii) Support of this policy from the local authority will be as a partner in both the primary and secondary behaviour and attendance partnerships. The achievement and inclusion services of the Council will ensure other local authority departments are aware of and include the philosophy of this policy in their practice.
- (iv) Where a request for absence form is not submitted, absences cannot be authorised retrospectively; this is prescribed in law and in these circumstances the penalty notice code of conduct must be followed.
- (v) Data from each individual school in relation to requests for absence will be monitored by the local authority and shared with schools and the partnerships. This will allow the partnerships to assess the impact of this policy.
- (vi) The behaviour and attendance partnerships will review this policy annually or in line with any legislative changes.

In order for consideration to be given, requests for absence must be for exceptional circumstances only. The primary and secondary behaviour and attendance partnerships and the East Riding of Yorkshire Council agree to follow the law, in such that the provision for Headteachers to authorise absence purely for the purpose of a family holiday is not an exceptional circumstance. Exceptional circumstances could include:

- (i) Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.

- (ii) Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- (iii) The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- (iv) To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- (v) Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of 1 to 4 above, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the principal education welfare officer prior to any authorisation being given to the parent. The principal education welfare officer will discuss each case with an independent Headteacher and will make a recommendation to the referring school.

Evidence would be required in each case.

**If a request meets the above exceptional circumstances but falls within the following times, the Headteacher must be convinced that absence from school is the only option:**

- (i) The first half term of any academic year (applies to all pupils);
- (ii) Year six transition day (for pupils in year six);
- (iii) Year six SATs week (for pupils in year six);
- (iv) Year nine options time (for pupils in year nine);
- (v) At any time during years 10 & 11 (for all pupils in these year groups);
- (vi) At any time specified by the school (this will be communicated to parents by each school).

Consistency across our large geographical area is vital for parental confidence. If a Headteacher has any doubts their thoughts can be discussed with the principal education welfare officer for advice and guidance prior to informing parents of their final decision. Headteachers would be well advised to keep a log of their decision making rationale.

## Looked After Children

This policy applies to all children, including those who are Looked After Children. The Headteacher will only approve an absence for a Looked After Child in accordance with Children, Family & Adult Services guidance. The only person who can request an absence for an East Riding Looked After Child is the area manager. Requests from foster carers and social workers should not be considered.

Headteachers should, in the cases of a child placed in an East Riding school who is a Looked After Child from another local authority, consult with the child's social worker. The social worker will enquire from that local authority what agreements or exemptions their policy on exceptional circumstances contains.

## **Procedures**

The school will retain a supply of 'Absence from School Request Forms' and give to parents, together with the Information for Parents, as required. The policy, information on absence from school and request forms will also be available on the Council's website.

Parents must return the absence request form, in reasonable time prior to the planned absence, to the Headteacher or to the senior member of school staff who has delegated responsibility for this decision making. If an absence is required at short notice the parent must make every effort to contact the Headteacher to discuss the planned absence.

Where children are absent from school without a prior request being made to the Headteacher the absence when it occurs cannot be authorised. The law now clearly states that no absence shall be retrospectively authorised.

If siblings or other children living in the same household (of compulsory school age) are known and identified on the 'Absence from School Request Form' and attend an East Riding of Yorkshire school, the Headteachers from both schools must reach a joint decision regarding the parent's request, preferably within five school days of receiving the absence request form. This will ensure a consistent approach across the East Riding of Yorkshire.

The Headteacher will decide if the request should be authorised or unauthorised using the 'Absence from School Decision Making Flowchart' (attached) and the principles within the absence from school for exceptional circumstances policy.

### **Absence from School Request Forms**

The parent wishing to remove the child from school should be the parent who completes the 'Absence from School Request Form'. Any disagreement between estranged parents should be resolved prior to submitting the request.

### **Authorised Absence Requests**

The Headteacher will reply to the parent who has made the request, informing them of the decision, the date of the child's last school day before the absence and the date the school expect the child to return to school. Within the letter it will be clear how the absence will be marked on the child's attendance certificate. A copy of the letter should be sent to any parent who does not have day to day care and responsibility of the child but does have parental responsibility. A copy of both letters will be placed on the child's school file.

### **Unauthorised Absence Requests**

The Headteacher will write to the parent who has made the request, informing them of the reason why this decision was made. The letter will clearly highlight that if the parent decides to go ahead with the absence it will be unauthorised and a penalty notice, per child, may be issued to each parent with day to day care and responsibility. A copy of the letter should be sent to any parent who does not have day to day care and responsibility of the child but does have parental responsibility. A copy of both letters will be placed on the child's school file.

## Actions Following Return from the Requested Absence

The school may take reasonable steps to ensure that the child catches up with missed work where appropriate.

## Delayed Return Following Authorised Absence

If the child does not return to school on the agreed date following their absence, the school will investigate this considering the East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Children Missing Education Policy. It is important to follow this policy to safeguard children, for example from a forced marriage.

If a child returns to school later than the agreed date and the parent claims their return was unavoidably delayed, this absence must be investigated and the most appropriate code used. Advice on this can be sought from the Education Welfare Service.

## Penalty Notice Referral Due To Unauthorised Absence from School

Once the unauthorised absence has been taken and the child has returned, the school will complete a penalty notice referral form emailing it to [education.welfare@eastriding.gov.uk](mailto:education.welfare@eastriding.gov.uk), together with a copy of the 'Absence from School Request Form', the letter sent by the Headteacher to the parent and a copy of the child's up to date attendance record. During an academic year two penalty notices can be issued to any one parent with respect to each child.

If procedures have been followed correctly and the case meets the penalty notice criteria the education welfare service will issue a penalty notice.

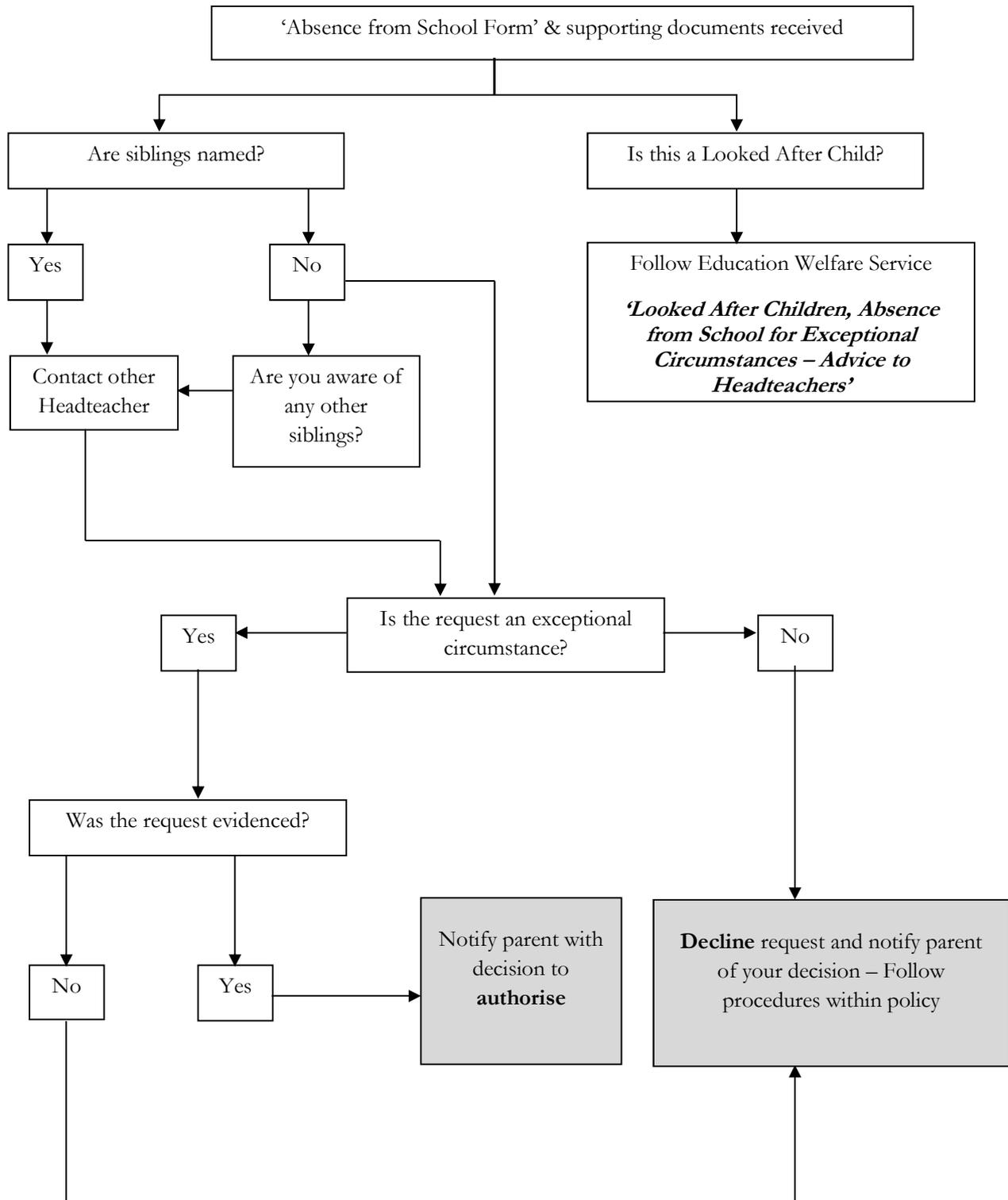
## Parent Pays Penalty Notice

The case is closed and the period of time that the parent received the penalty notice for will not be used in any further proceedings.

## Parent Does Not Pay Penalty Notice

If after 28 days the penalty notice remains unpaid, the education welfare service will liaise with the local authority Legal Services for consideration of it being dealt with in the Magistrates' Court. The education welfare service will keep the school informed of the proceedings upon request.

## Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Headteachers Decision Making Flow-Chart



## Links with other Policies/Documents

- Arrangements for Admissions to Primary School (April 2012)
- Arrangements for Admissions to Secondary School (April 2012)
- Home to School and College Transport Policy (March 2012)
- Fair Access Protocol (April 2012)
- Children & Young People's Strategic Plan (2013-2016)
- Access to Education Operational Plan (January 2014)
- School Absence for Exceptional Circumstances Policy (Behaviour and Attendance Partnership policy) (September 2013)
- Code of Conduct for Education Penalty Notice (September 2013)
- Children Missing Education Guidance and Procedure (November 2011)
- Children in Employment – A guide for parents, carers, employers, schools and pupils (September 2010)
- Children in Entertainment – General Guide (September 2010)

## **Terms outlined**

### **Compulsory School Age**

From the first day of term following a child's fifth birthday to the last Friday in June in the academic year in which a child reaches 16 years of age.

### **Attendance**

Regular attendance at a school, educational establishment or other approved education provision.

### **Punctuality**

Attendance before the school register is closed (usually after 30 minutes of the start of a school day)

### **Persistent Absentee**

A pupil who has less than 90% attendance by the end of any given academic year.

### **Looked After Children**

Children in the care of the local authority

### **Behaviour and Attendance Partnership**

There are two such voluntary partnerships within East Riding of Yorkshire Council's area; a Primary School's Partnership and a Secondary School's Partnership. Each partnership has representation from all its sector schools via a Head teacher or senior member of school staff and local authority representation. Each Partnership aims to work with other services, to improve behaviour and attendance.

### **Parent**

A parent means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

The local authority and educational establishment will decide who comes within the definition of parent in respect of a particular pupil when using the legal measures, but generally parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.

## Child Employment

All young people who work or assist in a trade or occupation which is carried out for profit purposes are considered to be employed, even if they receive no payment for that assistance. Children must be 13 years of age to work and be licensed with the local authority.

## Child Entertainment

All children from birth until completion of compulsory education if participating in modelling, theatre, television and paid sporting activity are defined as being involved with Child Entertainment, for which a license issued by the local authority is necessary. Performances undertaken by schools are not included in this definition.

## Children Missing Education

All children of compulsory school age who fail to register or do not attend the educational establishment, of which they are on roll for 10 school days or more; establishments then follow the children missing education procedures set down by the local authority. This is to safeguard the child and their right to a full time education.

## Elective Home Education

In the East Riding of Yorkshire this usually means when a parent takes on sole legal responsibility to provide an education for their child. Parents can however, approach a head teacher to request flexible education i.e. part-time school attendance to access aspects of the curriculum they feel they cannot provide, with the remainder being of an elective home education nature. Periods of time where the child is being home educated will be marked on the child's school attendance record as an authorised absence (C).

## Teenage Parent

The statutory duty of the local authority and educational establishment begin as soon as it is known a compulsory school age young person is pregnant. The support offered is to uphold the person's right to a full-time suitable education during pregnancy, home tuition for the period of maternity, or paternity, leave. Local authorities hold the statutory responsibility to provide home tuition for pupils at maintained schools, however, academies and independent establishments have a duty to provide the tuition.

## Home Tuition

Within the East Riding boundary there are no major hospitals, therefore, we do not provide a hospital school as other authorities do. We choose to discharge our statutory duty to provide a suitable full-time education to pupils who are not well enough to attend school by providing home tuition, delivered by qualified and assessed teachers.

## Contacts

Education Welfare Service  
County Hall  
Beverley  
East Riding of Yorkshire  
HU17 9BA  
education.welfare@eastriding.gov.uk  
(01482) 392146

DCSF school attendance team  
[school.attendance@dscf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:school.attendance@dscf.gsi.gov.uk)

Date of Policy/Review:

January 2017