

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Wistaston Academy
Primary and Nursery School
Together We Learn • Together We Achieve

Policy Author	Tina Brittain
Responsible Governor's Committee	Quality of Education
Date Reviewed	September 2026
Frequency of Review	Review in the light of changes to legislation or operating experience

Introduction

Regular and punctual attendance is a legal requirement and is essential for children to maximise their educational outcomes and opportunities. At Wistaston Academy, we aim for every child to reach their full potential. Regular attendance supports children's learning, personal growth and wellbeing, while also helping them to develop positive relationships and a strong sense of belonging within our school community.

For the purpose of the policy Wistaston Academy is referred to as the school.

Legislation

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise"*.
- Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 states that *"if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school his parent is guilty of an offence"*. Therefore, regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement, as well as being essential to enable children to maximise their educational attainments and opportunities.

For Education Law purposes, **parental responsibility** lies with whomever the child resides with. This may include one parent, both parent/s, or a carer/s.

Objectives

- To ensure that all learners attend school well, aiming for 100% attendance or as close as possible.
- To ensure that all learners are punctual.
- To win the support of parents in ensuring that their children attend school well and that they arrive on time.
- To keep good electronic records of attendance through school registers and to take prompt action to follow up absences.
- To investigate and act immediately where unauthorised absence is confirmed or suspected.
- To work effectively with other agencies to follow up attendance issues promptly and efficiently.
- To monitor closely pupils with attendance and punctuality issues and to work with parents and where appropriate, other agencies to bring about improvement.

Procedures

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is good reason for absence.

There are two types of absence:

- Authorised: Where the school has approved the reason for the learner's absence.
- Unauthorised: Where the school does not approve the absence or no valid reason is provided.

Parents are required to notify the school on the first day of absence and provide daily ongoing updates if the absence continues as part of the school's safeguarding procedures. If no contact is made, the school will:

1. Contact parents/carers via telephone or email.
2. If no response is received, undertake a home visit.

If a satisfactory explanation is not provided, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Completing the Register

Registers are legal documents and must be completed twice daily (a.m. and p.m.). They may be required as evidence in court proceedings for non-attendance.

- The school uses a computerised registration system.
- Morning registration is at 8:50 a.m. for both Key Stages.
- Nursery registers are at 8:50 a.m. for the morning session and 12:30 p.m. for the afternoon session.

Registers must be marked using the Department for Education (DfE) codes.

Lateness & Punctuality

All late pupils must report to the **main office**, where minutes late will be recorded and reasons noted.

- Pupils arriving **between 8:50 a.m. and 9:20 a.m.** will receive a **late mark (L)**
- Pupils arriving **after 9:20 a.m.** will be recorded as **unauthorised absence (U)**.

Why Punctuality Matters

- Punctuality is essential, as arriving on time ensures children do not miss important learning, are able to settle with their class, and begin the day positively.
-
- Persistent lateness has a direct impact on your child's learning and routine and can also be disruptive to the rest of the class.
-
- At Wistaston Academy, we believe that with support from both home and school, we can help our children build these positive habits. Please encourage your child to be on time each day and to take responsibility for their punctuality.

PENALTY NOTICES

Penalty Notices may be issued in accordance with the Cheshire East Council Code of Conduct where unauthorised absence occurs.

Penalty Notices may be issued for

Term time leave: Penalty Notice fines may be issued for term time leave of 5 or more days (10 sessions) in a 10-week period.

10 Sessions of Unauthorised absence in a rolling 10 week period: A Penalty Notices may be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period.

However, school retain the discretion to request a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. For example, where parents/carers are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below the threshold.

Per Parent/Per Child

Penalty Notice fines will continue to be issued per parent/carer per child. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent/carer receiving 3 separate fines.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular school attendance the fine will be charged at:

£160 per parent/carer, per child if paid within 28 days of the issue, reducing to £80 per parent/carer, per child if paid within 21 days.

(Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)

Second Offence

Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent/carer for the same pupil within 3 years of the first penalty notice, for either term time leave or irregular attendance the second penalty notice will be charged at:

£160 if paid within 28 days. (Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)

Third Offence

On the third time that an offence is committed within 3 years of the first penalty notice for either a term time leave or irregular attendance a penalty notice will not be issued.

The Local Authority may place the matter before the court. The Magistrates may impose a fine up to £2500.

The case may proceed to Parental Prosecution under the Single Justice Procedure. If found guilty of the offence of 'Failure to send a child to school' the Magistrates can impose a fine up to £1000 or legal proceedings under Section 444 (1a) can include a fine of up to £2500.

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

- Worksheets on attendance; time-keeping monitoring sheets
- Lessons on telling the time
- Weekly attendance assemblies
- Writing letters
- Class/Children's Council discussions on feelings, likes and dislikes about school
- Peer group support – contacting friends who are absent
- Positive support for those pupils who have been absent for a significant period – planned reintegration

What Parents can do to help

Let the school know immediately why your child is absent. Contact must be made with school each day your child is absent from school. Where no notification is given, the school will either telephone or send a text to the parent/carer and complete a home visit. After a lengthy illness, or where absence is a concern, we ask parents to send in a doctor's note or letter and evidence that medicines have been prescribed.

Communication with school is extremely important in supporting your child. Try to make any dental/GP appointments outside of school time.

IF PARENTS ARE WORRIED ABOUT THEIR CHILDS ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL WHAT CAN THEY DO?

- You can talk to Tina Brittain, Attendance Manager and Family Support Worker.
- Talk to your child's Class Teacher
- Each school has a designated Education Welfare Officer who can be contacted through school

Overview of Wistaston Academy Attendance Policy.

If learners are to get the greatest benefit from their education in school, it is important that they have good attendance and arrive punctually. As learners grow and prepare for their next stages of education and employment, they need to see good attendance and punctuality as important qualities that are valued by others and employers. We will do all that we can to encourage good attendance and punctuality.

Where learners are not conforming to our high expectations for attendance and punctuality, we will put into place effective strategies to bring about improvement. Wistaston Academy will strive to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils are given the same opportunities, which may mean extra support in some cases. This Attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

Useful Documents and Resources

The following documents and guidance have informed this policy:

- Department for Education – Working Together to Improve School Attendance – statutory guidance, updated July 2026.
- Department for Education – Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance.
- Department for Education – Communicating with Parents about School Attendance (2026).
- Department for Education – School Attendance and Absence: Guidance for Parents.
- Department for Education – Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools (updated September 2025).
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended.
- Cheshire East Council – Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices for School Absence.
- Education Act 1996, including statutory duties relating to school attendance.
- Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, where relevant to parental responsibility measures.