



WEST RISE JUNIOR SCHOOL

**POLICY:** ATTENDANCE AND HOLIDAY

Original date of policy: October 2018

Ratified by Governors: 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022

Signed by Headteacher: M. Fairclough

Review Date: May 2023

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At West Rise Junior School we inspire and empower independent and creative learners who will continue to enrich their lives and those of others within a culture of high achievement and mutual respect.

At West Rise Junior School we aim to identify and support all pupils following guidance laid out in the East Sussex and West Rise Junior Dyslexia Policy .

*West Rise Junior School is a Rights Respecting School and puts the articles of the Unicef Children's Rights Charter at the heart of all school policies. This policy reflects that as a school we recognise that all children have the right to be safe, be educated and learn, be treated fairly, be listened to, a healthy lifestyle, extra support if they need it and a right to join in cultural and artistic activities.*

This Policy reflects the vision and aims of West Rise Junior School by:

- Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

**PRINCIPLES**

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absences or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

***Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness and other unavoidable cause.***

***Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:***

- ***Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily***
- ***Truancy before or during the school day***
- ***Absences which have never been properly explained***
- ***Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.***

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service (ESBAS). ESBAS will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

## **PROCEDURES**

Day to day attendance matters are dealt with by the School's Attendance Officer with reference to the Headteacher. The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences.

## **HOLIDAY AND ABSENCE**

Parents are asked not to take holidays in term time. Holidays will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Headteacher. If you wish to request time off for a holiday please complete and submit a Withdrawal from Learning form to the Headteacher giving at least two weeks notice. If you do take an unauthorised holiday this is noted in the register, and unauthorised holiday of 5 days or over has to be notified to ESBAS who will then monitor your child's attendance.

## **ABSENCES**

If any child is absent from school, the parent/carer must telephone the School by 9.20 a.m. on the first morning. If we have not heard from the parent/carer by this time the school will make every effort to contact them. Parents/carers will have been asked to provide telephone numbers for this purpose. This will ensure that the absence becomes authorised. **In the interest of any child's safety, it is imperative that we are advised of**

**their whereabouts if they are not in school.** If we do not receive any explanation, a letter will be sent from the school for the parent/carer to complete and return. If we still do not receive a satisfactory reply, the absence remains unauthorised and will be noted as such on the child's report. Also our registers are inspected on a regular basis by the ESBAS and they will note unauthorised absences and if necessary, act on them.

### **ILLNESS, MEDICAL AND DENTAL APPOINTMENTS**

We do ask that parents notify us if their child is absent for medical reasons. If a pupil is absent for a prolonged period or if there is any reason to doubt the validity of the reason for absence, the Attendance Office or School Health department may be contacted.

### **LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

The School are contacted weekly by the Virtual School to check on the attendance of the Looked After Children.

The School Attendance Officer will notify the SENCO or Headteacher about attendance concerns for vulnerable children, i.e. those on the Child Protection Register.

### **LATENESS**

It is our policy to actively discourage late arrival. A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning, but also that of others. The school gate is locked at 8.45 a.m. and any child arriving after that time must report through the School Office. Pupils who arrive late will be marked as such in the register. Any pupil arriving after the registers close at 9.30 a.m. will be marked as an unauthorised absence for that session. Obviously if they are late because of a medical appointment, this will be authorised.

### **CHILDREN LEAVING THE SCHOOL**

Children remain on roll until contact is made by their receiving school. Records are then sent to that school and an Off Roll Form completed and sent to ESBAS. If a child leaves and the school is not advised of the child's new school, this will be identified on the Off Roll Form. Any serious concerns about vulnerable children will be directed to ESBAS verbally or electronically.

### **INCENTIVES FOR ATTENDANCE**

Certificates are issued at the end of each term to children who have achieved 100% attendance for that term. Children who achieve 99% or 100% attendance for the whole year receive a reward at the end of the year.

### **SUMMARY**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.