This Policy was adopted by the governing body of

INSPIRE Partnership Multi- Academy Trust

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Dated: Sept 2020

Date for Review: September 2021

Statement of intent

The Local Authority, School/Academy seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive an education which enables them to maximise opportunities for each child to reach his or her full potential. Reducing absence from school continues to be a priority both nationally and locally in the Wakefield district.

Research shows there is evidence of a strong link between good attendance and increased attainment. Pupils who regularly attend school progress both socially and academically ahead of pupils who don't attend regularly. Regular attendance enables pupils to adapt better to routines, school work and friendship groups. As a consequence those pupils will have a positive experience of learning have a successful transition from primary to secondary and beyond to further education and training.

Attendance Target

Target 2019 – 2020

Target 2020 - 2021

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of our Attendance Policy are:

1. To reduce absence, lateness and raise awareness of the importance of school attendance.
2. To include all school staff, parents, pupils and Governors in our attendance strategies.
3. To develop a robust electronic data handling system which enables school staff, the Trust, the Local Authority and Department for Education to access attendance data in order to work in partnership with school.
4. To work effectively with parents/carers and partner agencies, using a range of strategies to improve attendance of individual pupils and the whole school.

The Law

The 1996 Education Act, expects all children on roll to attend school every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act states that if a child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly, the parent is guilty of an offence. Parents, therefore have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's attendance at school. Failure to do this can lead to legal action being taken by the Local Authority in the Magistrates Court, or the need to issue Penalty Fines. Since March 2001 there has been a further offence, Section 444 (1A) where a parent knowingly allows their child to be absent from school. This offence can carry a custodial sentence.

A child is compulsory school age at the beginning of the 1st term after their 5th birthday, therefore:

- Children who turn 5 between 1st January and 31st March will be of compulsory school age at the beginning of the school term after 31st March;

- Children who turn 5 between 1st April and 31st August will be of compulsory school age at the beginning of the school term 31st August;
- Children who turn 5 between 1st September and 31st December will be of compulsory school age at the beginning of the school term after 31st December.

A child remains of compulsory school age until the last Friday in June the school year that they turn 16. From September 2013 all 16 year olds must remain in education or training until the end of the academic year and from September 2015 they will be required to continue until their 18th birthday in some form of education, employment or training.

Where parent/carers are not fulfilling this responsibility, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to uphold the rights of children and young people to education. Where necessary, this includes taking legal action.

In order to fulfil our duty to improve children and young people's regular attendance at school, Wakefield Education Welfare Service will continue to issue penalty notices in respect of holidays/leave of absence in term time, in line with the DFE Pupil Registration (England) Regulations 2006. Penalty Notices give parents an opportunity to avoid prosecution. If a Penalty Notice is paid parent/carer's will not be prosecuted.

Section 576 Education 1996 defines a 'parent' to include:

- A biological parent of the child (even if they do not have Parental Responsibility and even if the child does not reside with that parent);
- Any person who is not a parent but has Parental Responsibility for the child (for example through a Residence Order, Adoption Order or Care Order);
- Someone who has care for the child.

Therefore all of these people have the duty to ensure a child of compulsory school age receives a suitable education. It is possible for this duty to be fulfilled by home educating a child; please see information on "Elected Home Education".

The Education must be:

- Full time
- Efficient – the education must achieve what it is set out to achieve;
- Suitable – to their age, ability and aptitude and any special education needs they may have. The education must equip the child for the life within the community and must not limit a child's options in later life.

THE EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER AND EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE WAKEFIELD.

- The Education Welfare Officer will work with children and families to ensure their school attendance and safeguarding is maintained.
- The Education Welfare Officer will work in partnership with other agencies and will offer advice and signposting for referrals to appropriate organisations.
- The Education Welfare Service will undertake statutory legal action on behalf of the school.

- The Education Welfare Officer will support schools with individual School Audits and Action Plans.
- The Educational will support the School with Raising the profile of Good attendance.

Persistent Absence

A pupil becomes a persistent absentee if he/she has missed 10% or more of school for any reason and has an attendance of below 90%.

Schools are encouraged to invite parents/carers into school to discuss the situation, and referrals may be made to the Educational Welfare Officer. In some cases partnership working will result in a range of strategies being deployed to improve attendance; including participation in the FastTrack Attendance Programme, Education Plan development, referral to School Health where relevant and Penalty Fines.

The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that school is a

place where:

- children want to come;
- children are treated with respect and feel valued;
- needs are recognised and addressed;
- all children can experience success within a enriched, relevant and diverse curriculum.

Schools should be committed to promoting good attendance to give its pupils the best start in life. To encourage this it is advised that each school has their own structured reward system to promote good attendance.

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Any absence from school is detrimental to a child's education and progress. It disrupts learning, routines and progress. Government research shows that **17 days** lost learning in one school year can lead to a drop of one grade at SAT and GCSE level.

School will follow up any unexplained absences by contacting parents / carers on the first day of absence. The School have the right to conduct home visits on the grounds of nonattendance. Children with inadequate attendance will become part of our Key Focus Attendance Pupils. These children will have their attendance monitored daily. Parents / carers will be invited into school to discuss attendance issues if there is a cause for concern. If attendance does not improve a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Some absences are unavoidable, usually due to illness, bereavement or extreme family circumstances. These absences should be supported by medical evidence where possible or a written explanation from the parent / carer. The decision as to whether an absence is authorised or not lies with the Headteacher.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

An unauthorised absence is an absence which is not permissible in Law. Unauthorised absences include:- birthdays, shopping trips, days out, term time holidays and absences where no explanation has been received. School will discuss unauthorised absence with the Education Welfare Officer and further action will be agreed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE/TERM TIME HOLIDAYS

The Government have issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- Applications for leave of absence must be done in writing, addressed for the attention of the Headteacher, this letter must include the dates of absence, many school days will be missed and any reason for the absence.
- Headteachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Exceptional circumstances being defined as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Headteachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- If a Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Wakefield County Council's Legal Services to consider criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

The DFE website is clear that leave of absence is unlikely to be granted for the purpose of a family holiday. As such the Governors have made the decision to refuse requests for term time holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances. In order to enforce this decision, the Governors have agreed to the issuing of Penalty Notices for parents taking their children out of school during term time for holidays without permission. The school will work closely with the Education Welfare Service to enforce this policy.

This policy is in line with Wakefield Council Code of Conduct on Penalty Notices and falls under section 44 of the Education Act 1996. The Education (penalty Notices) Regulations 2007 set the framework for the operation of the Penalty Notice scheme. The Code of Conduct states that a Penalty Notice may be issued where there are at least 10 sessions (half days) recorded as unauthorised absence.

Payment of a Penalty Notice is £60 per child, per parent if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. If a parent fails to make payment the matter will be progressed to court by the Education Welfare Service. This could result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court

and fines of up to £2,500.00 and/or a range of other measures such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences depending on the circumstances.

4.1 Lateness/punctuality

The law states that children should arrive at school on time, every day. For example if School doors open at 8.45am it is expected that pupils should be there ready to learn from the time when the first register is taken. A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late; using the appropriate code (L).

Poor punctuality is unacceptable and persistent lateness, i.e. after the close of registration could result in a penalty notice. A pupil who arrives after the close of register will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U). If children are late on a regular basis then the school may meet parents to discuss what measures may be required to ensure that child/ren arrive at school by the appropriate time

Flexible schooling

The Inspire Partnership Multi- Academy trust does not grant Flexible schooling timetables, we believe they are not compatible with our schooling ethos, as they don't allow for full integration into school life. A Flexible Timetable will only be considered on the grounds of Medical need, unless in conjunction with a phased return plan.

Children Missing Education (CME)

When a child goes missing from education, which includes within the school day, unauthorised absences will be monitored and followed up in line with procedures, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions. In the case of a child in care, the social worker must be informed in line with safeguarding

Should the parent remove the child from school for a period of absence without prior permission, the school should also put this in writing, explaining the consequences for doing so.

Pupils will be removed from admission and attendance registers as required by law, after confirmation from Wakefield Council. For further advice please consult with CME guidance and the CME Team; email educationcme@wakefield.gov.uk

Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling

Parents/carers of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

Performance licences are applied for from Education Welfare Service by the appropriate agency/company.

Absence through competing at Sporting events

Parents of young people who are engaged in recognised sporting activities can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs.

Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Headteacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families

Traveller pupils include Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

Absence of a child from a Traveller community family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return. Ideally this would be agreed with the school prior to the departure to travel for work purposes.

To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

ROLES / RESPONSIBILITIES

SCHOOL

The responsibilities in relation to attendance are as follows:-

1. Set high expectations for pupil attendance, and monitor individual and whole school attendance on a daily and weekly basis,
2. Identify causes of concern with regard to pupil attendance.
3. Conduct first day response where there is unexplained absence.
4. Invite parents/carers into school to discuss pupil attendance which is a cause of concern.
5. Work with parents of individual pupils to try to improve attendance and punctuality.
6. Work in partnership with Wakefield Authority and the Education Welfare Service and the Inspire Partnership MAT.
7. Maintain electronic registration data systems effectively and deploy them robustly to facilitate presentation reports.
8. To provide attendance data for parents.
9. Promote attendance at all levels.
10. Celebrate excellent and improved attendance.

PARENTS / CARERS

1. To ensure pupils arrive at school on time everyday and that routines are in place at home to support this.
2. To contact school by 9.30am on each day of absence if the absence is unavoidable.
3. To obtain evidence where possible to support medical absence.
4. To avoid term time holidays, and attempt to minimise school time appointments.
5. To ensure pupils excess a full time education, unless agreed.

PUPILS

1. To arrive at school, on time everyday with correct equipment and ready to learn.
2. Comply with school regulations regarding attendance and punctuality
3. Discuss any concerns they may have with staff regarding attendance and punctuality.

EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

1. The Education Welfare Service will work in partnership to promote and facilitate improved attendance, at an individual level, by supporting the Fastrack to Attendance Programme; and at a whole school level using proactive strategies and action plans.
2. The Education Welfare Service will work with children and families to ensure their school attendance and safeguarding is maintained.
3. The Education Welfare Service will provide guidance with regards to Children Missing Education.
4. The Education Welfare Service will work in partnership with other agencies and will offer advice and signposting for referrals to appropriate organisations.
5. The Education Welfare Service will undertake legal action on behalf of the school.
6. Wakefield Local Authority will support the school with networking and training events and with individual School Audits and Action Plans.

Appendices

1. Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
B	Off-site educational activity (not dual registered)	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
C	Other authorised circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
L	Late arrival	Pupils arrives late before register has closed

M	**Medical/Dental appointment**	**School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness**
N	**No reason of absence yet provided**	**Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)**
O	**Unauthorised absence**	**School is not satisfied with the reason for pupil's absence.**
P	**Sporting Activity**	**Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school**
R	**Religious observance**	**Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance**
S	**Study Leave**	**Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations**
T	**Traveller Absence**	**Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school**
U	**Late (after registration has closed)**	**Pupil arrived at school after the register closed**
V	**Educational trip or visit**	**Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school**
X	**Not compulsory**	**Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend**
W	**Work Experience**	**Year 10 pupil experiencing working environment.**
Y	**Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.**	**School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody**
#	**Planned whole or partial school closure**	**Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day**
Z	**Pupil not on roll**	
-	**All pupils should attend**	