Attendance and Punctuality Policy  
Updated June 2018

Introduction
Every child is entitled to an education. Parents who do not ensure that their children attend school regularly put their children’s future at risk.

When a child is absent from school, this results in lost learning opportunities.

The attendance pattern of all our children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure that a regular attendance pattern is maintained.

We expect all children to attend school every day, in term time, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of good attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect a child’s:

- Attainment in school
- Relationships with other children and their ability to form relationships
- Confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others

As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve difficulties.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Consequently, this policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on equality, safeguarding, bullying, medicines and behaviour.

Legal Framework (See Appendix A)
Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive full time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary use legal enforcement.
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again at the start of the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present
- Absent
- Present at approved educational activity
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil’s absence has been received.

Parents should advise the school by phone call or in person on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal expectations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers. In the event that a reason for an absence has not been given on the first morning of the absence, parents will be reminded by text, in the first instance, to provide a reason. Further communication will follow if a reason is still not forthcoming.

**Absence will be categorised as follows:**

- **Illness**
  - In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill is acceptable. Parents may be asked, however, to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness.

- **Medical/Dental Appointments**
  - Parents are advised, where possible, to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day.
  - Parents should show the appointment card to school.

- **Other Authorised Circumstances**
  - This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

- **Excluded (no alternative provision made)**
  - Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence.

- **Religious observance**
  - Warlingham Village Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates an application for an authorised absence or special leave for religious observance. It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent’s religious body.
**Traveller Absence**
- The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as frequently as possible. To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the education act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 100 days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in trade or business that requires them to travel and the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits. It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not school. If a Traveller family gives the school the date they are going travelling, where they are travelling and the date of return, a school place will be held open for this time. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.
- Warlingham Village School can only operate effectively as the child’s base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:
  - advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen
  - inform the school regarding proposed dates of return
- Warlingham Village will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling for the purposes of trade or business and has given a date that they intend to return.

**Family Holidays and Extended Leave**
Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time.

Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and should be made aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year.

**Late Arrival**
Registration begins at 8.40 a.m. and closes at 8.50 a.m. Pupils arriving after 8:50 a.m will be marked as late (L code). However, pupils arriving after 9:00 a.m will be marked as unauthorised (U code). This will not be authorised and will be counted as an absence for that school session.

On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry!
First Day Absence
Parents are expected to contact the school before 9.00 a.m. every day to report absence and notify the school of the reason for the absence. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take the call. (01883) 622 747 Option 1
If the school has not been contacted to report an absence, the school will telephone the person responsible for the child within the morning of the absence.
If a child has a medical appointment, a note may be sent to school on the day prior to the absence, but we encourage parents/carers to make routine medical and dental appointments outside of school hours whenever possible.

Unauthorised absence (also see Appendix B)
Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted by the school.

Examples of unsatisfactory absence include:
- a pupil’s/family member’s birthday
- shopping for uniform
- having their hair cut
- closure of a sibling’s school for INSET (or other) purposes
- ‘couldn’t get up!’
- feeling unwell where the child is considered fit enough to attend school

Penalty Notices
The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council, may issue a penalty notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child’s unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount. The amount payable on issue of a penalty notice is £60 per child per adult, if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 per child per parent/carer if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
If the penalty notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must consider prosecuting the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a penalty notice may be issued
Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

There are two ways of a penalty notice being issued:

1: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013, state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days that a child can be away from school if leave is granted. Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the ‘leave of absence’ is without the authority of the Headteacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. These days do not have to be consecutive. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned
that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

2: The issue of a penalty notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 90% since the start of the academic year and there are no less than 7 unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents’ failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Education Welfare will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Penalty Notices relating to Exclusions
Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours, when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice which requires a payment of £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

Deletions from the Register
In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted when one of the following circumstances applies:

- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system where the parents have informed the school in writing of their decision
- Failure to return 10 days after an agreed holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and the school have tried to locate the pupil
- Left the school but not known where the pupil has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil

Warlingham Village Primary School will follow the Local Authorities ‘children missing from education’ protocol when a pupil’s whereabouts is unknown.

Promoting Attendance
The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their legal responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.
Attendance Awards
Weekly Class Challenge: The class with the highest attendance record is awarded the silver plate and extra play. Attendance certificates are awarded at the end of the year for 99% and 100% attendance.

Attendance Targets
The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school leader will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Roles and Responsibilities
Warlingham Village Primary School believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider community.

The Leadership Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the policy and are adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior administrator to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Report the school’s attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
The Governing Body will:

- Annually review the school’s Attendance & Punctuality Policy and ensure that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Monitor the school’s attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body meetings
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

Parents should support their child’s attendance at school by:

- Talking to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child’s work and educational progress
- Instilling the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encouraging their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contacting the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Avoiding unnecessary absences. Wherever possible, making appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Asking the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Informing the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child’s attendance
- Supporting the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child’s education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Encouraging routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keeping their child off school to go shopping, to help at home, to look after other members of the family or for birthdays

Support systems
Warlingham Village Primary School recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child’s life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school.
Parents should make the school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child’s attendance and or behaviour in school. This may help the school identify any additional support required.

The school also recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.
The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance panels
- Parenting contracts
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors
- PSHE
- Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning materials
- Family learning
- Reward systems
- Behaviour support
- Reintegration support packages

Advice is also available from the Local Education Welfare Officer, South East – Tel. 01737 737 777

The Registration System
The School will use manual paper registers and a computerised system for keeping the school attendance records.

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
<td>Present (AM)</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\</td>
<td>Present (PM)</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)</td>
<td>Approved Education Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)</td>
<td>Authorised absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)</td>
<td>Not counted in possible attendances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Excluded (no alternative provision made)</td>
<td>Authorised absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)</td>
<td>Unauthorised absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Family holiday (agreed)</td>
<td>Authorised absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)</td>
<td>Authorised absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Approved Education Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Late (before registers closed)</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Medical/Dental appointments</td>
<td>Authorised absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>No reason yet provided for absence</td>
<td>Unauthorised absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)</td>
<td>Unauthorised absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Approved sporting activity</td>
<td>Approved Education Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Religious observance</td>
<td>Authorised absence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Study leave</td>
<td>Authorised absence</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Traveller absence</td>
<td>Authorised absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>Late (after registers closed)</td>
<td>Unauthorised absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Educational visit or trip</td>
<td>Approved Education Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Work experience</td>
<td>Approved Education Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils</td>
<td>Not counted in possible attendances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Enforced closure</td>
<td>Not counted in possible attendances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Pupil not yet on roll</td>
<td>Not counted in possible attendances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>School closed to pupils</td>
<td>Not counted in possible attendances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.
Entries in paper registers must be in ink.
All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid)

**Register Security**
Once the registers have been taken they are safely stored in the school office
APPENDIX A

The Law

The Education Act 1996 states:

The parents/carers must ensure that all children of compulsory school age (5-16) receive a full-time education that is suitable for their age, ability and aptitude and special needs. Children must be educated from the commencement of the school term following their 5th birthday, until the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach their 16th birthday. The Local Authority has a responsibility to ensure that parents/carers fulfil their legal responsibility and must also ensure that there are enough school places for all children to attend. As parent you may be committing an offence if you fail to ensure that your child attends school regularly.

Once you have registered your child at a school it is your responsibility to make sure that they attend regularly and punctually.

If you fail to do so the Local Authority has a statutory duty to consider legal action to enforce school attendance. This may involve the issuing of a penalty notice, prosecution or application for an Education Supervision Order.

APPENDIX B

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories:

1. Unauthorised Absence - This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.
2. Authorised Absence - This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.
3. Approved Educational Activity - This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes. This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration