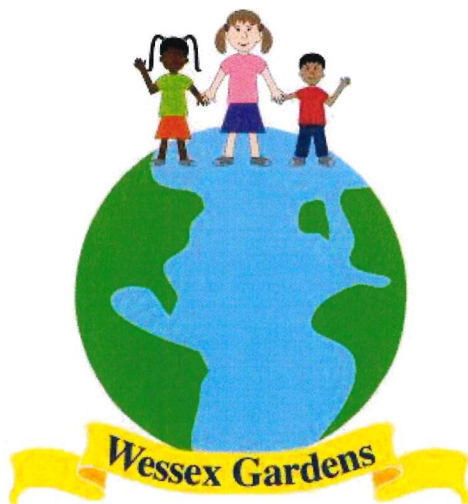


# Wessex Gardens Primary & Nursery School



## ATTENDANCE POLICY JULY 2019

*At Wessex Gardens we believe that every child has the right to feel safe and to be protected from any situation or practice that could result in them being harmed. Each child's welfare is of paramount importance and we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children in our care and we expect all staff, governors, placements and volunteers to share this firm commitment.*

### *Growing Together*

*Wessex Gardens Primary and Nursery School is a place where we grow kind, confident, resilient and independent lifelong learners in a trusting and honest environment. Here everyone is welcome and valued. We are motivated and supported to reach our full potential as we continue to aspire to excellence.*

This policy was agreed by the Governing Body on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Signed:  Headteacher

Signed:  Chairman of the Governing body

Policy review date: July 2020

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

This attendance policy reflects the vision and aims of Wessex Gardens Primary and Nursery School.

At Wessex Gardens Primary and Nursery School, all staff work collaboratively to encourage every pupil to strive for excellence. Every child will be supported, challenged and valued. One way in which we do this is by encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their maximum potential. We are determined in encouraging the development of high self-esteem, and for our children to take pride and ownership of their learning. In conjunction with this, we will continuously provide a clear framework for parents and staff as well as clear procedures for involving parents and/or external agencies where appropriate.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils that are registered at our school on the school website.

Wessex Gardens Primary and Nursery School encourages all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance and punctuality, and recognises that Under the Education Act 1996 "parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis".

### **Aims & Objectives**

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of, and clear, about the actions necessary to promote excellent attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve children's achievement by ensuring that children have high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 96% for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues, for which documents have been provided to the school.
- Create an ethos in which excellent attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents/carers and children of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception age children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with children, parents/carers, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all children realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which children feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in children a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting excellent attendance.

### **Responsibility of Parents/Carers**

Children who are persistently late or absent fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

## **Punctuality**

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To ensure that their child/children arrive to school on time between 8:30 am and 8:40 am unless they attend the breakfast club to leave sufficient time to get to the classroom by 8:45 am.
- To ensure children who are late after 9:00 am report to the school office to sign in. Records are kept of the pupils that are late with an L code in the register. Any child that arrives after 9:15 am will be marked with a U code, equivalent to an unauthorised absence.

## **Persistent Latecomers**

Children who repeatedly attend school late after 9:00 am will be brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer. Warning letters will be issued to the parents/carers of these children

Parents/carers should note that children who arrive late after 9:15 am are given a 'U' code, which is the equivalent of an unauthorised absence, and this will affect the child's attendance figures. Fixed penalty notices may be issued to parents/carers whose children persistently arrive after this time.

## **End of the school day:**

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to:

- ensure children are collected promptly at the end of the school day, and that necessary arrangements are in place for the journey home. If these differ from the child's normal arrangements, the class teacher and school office should be made aware of this.

Children who have not been collected by 3:45 pm will be placed in the After School Club until the parent arrives to collect. The charge is £5 if the child is collected prior to 4:30 pm and £10 if the child is collected between 4:30 pm and 5:45 pm.

## **Absences**

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to:

- notify the school on the first day of absence before 9:00 am or as soon as possible. Parents can report an absence by leaving a message on the absence line, telephoning the school office, or by email;
- provide medical evidence, where possible, on the child's return to school;
- ensure that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend school before and return to school after the appointment;
- liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, for example a sick parent/carer.

Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted after 9:00 am.

## **Lone Travellers (Years 5 and 6)**

If your child is a lone traveller you must contact the school by 8:30 am if your child is ill. If we have not received notification, and we are unable to contact you by 9:30 am, we may notify the police to request that they carry out a missing child investigation to ensure that your child is safe.

### **Illness/Medical absences**

In addition to the points above, if a child is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request medical evidence for further absences. This can take the form of a GP appointment card, a consultant letter, a copy of a prescription or bringing the child to school to see the welfare officer.

**The school will automatically request medical evidence for any illness absence taken immediately before or after a school holiday. A Fixed Penalty Notice will be requested from the Local Authority if evidence is not provided.**

### **Absence for holidays**

Permission will not be granted for holidays. Parents/carers are expected to take their children on holiday during the school holidays to minimise the impact of missing education.

### **Exceptional leave of absence**

If there are exceptional circumstances, parents/carers must complete a leave of absence request form in advance of the trip (ideally at least 4 weeks prior). These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the business leader or headteacher, and they will use their discretion whilst applying government recommendations.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to:

- obtain a leave of absence form from the school office.
- complete and submit the form in advance of booking tickets for the period of absence (ideally 4 weeks prior).
- provide a copy of the booking document clearly showing that the booking was made after consultation with the school
- provide a document to confirm the exceptional circumstance

If parents/carers decide to take a holiday without the school's authorisation, the child's absences will be marked as unauthorised, and the absence will be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice.

**The Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued by the Education Welfare Service for unauthorised holiday absence during term time. This fine is payable at £60 per child, per parent if paid within 21 days; if paid between 21 and 28 days the fine doubles to £120. Example: two children with both parents will receive a penalty notice of £240 if paid within 21 days, and £480 if paid within 28 days. If the fines remain unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority may prosecute you for your child's absence from school.**

### **Absence for other reasons**

Absences for reasons such as religious observance (one day per religious holiday up to a maximum of 2 days per year) or close family bereavement (up to a maximum of 5 days if overseas) *may* be authorised by the business leader or headteacher.

Absences for close family members' weddings or funerals will be limited to one day's authorised absence, if granted.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to:

- inform the school as soon as possible when sudden circumstances occur which prevent a family bringing a child to school, so that the appropriate code can be recorded in the register;

- complete a leave of absence request form, and await confirmation by the school that the leave has been granted, **prior** to booking travel.

**Absence will NOT be authorised during the:**

- week of KS2 SATS testing in May
- KS1 assessment period
- week of the Y1 phonics screening check in June

**Unexplained Absence**

When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason is given, the parent/carer may be liable for prosecution and/or a fine from the Local Authority.

**Role of the Education Welfare Officer**

Regular monitoring is carried out by the Education Welfare Officer. Children who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, will be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer, and may be invited in to an attendance meeting to discuss the absences and offered support to improve attendance.

The Education Welfare Officer:

- investigates attendance below 96% if children have unauthorised absences;
- writes to parents/carers or invites them to attend a meeting to discuss the absences;
- arranges Court Assessment Meetings with parents/carers with frequent absences or absence exceeds 10%;
- investigates persistent lateness;
- investigates any unexplained absence which exceeds more than 5 consecutive days;
- ensures parents/carers are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school;
- refers cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Welfare Officer.
- reports whole school and individual attendance data when required.

**Children Missing Education**

If a child is absent (unexplained) for at least 5 consecutive days, the Education Welfare Service will be notified. A home visit may be carried out. If the absence continues for a total of 10 days, the family will be referred as a Child Missing Education case for the Local Authority to investigate.