



# Wrenn School, Wellingborough

## Policy on Pupil Attendance



### 1 Pupils should attend school

- 1.1 Children who are on the roll of Wrenn School should attend School on every one of the 190 days each year on which the School is open for the education of pupils.
- 1.2 A pupil in Year 11 may leave school on the last Friday in June in the school year in which the pupil reaches the age of 16. However, the majority of pupils in Year 11 continue on the roll of the School thereafter, voluntarily, by entering the School's Sixth Form.

### 2 Parental duty to ensure attendance

- 2.1 Parents of children of compulsory school age must ensure that they receive an efficient and suitable full-time education, either at school or otherwise [Education Act, 1944, section 36].
- 2.2 Allowing a child to be absent from School without good reason is against the law, and parents can be fined (currently, up to £1000 in the first instance).

### 3 Unavoidable absences

- 3.1 An unavoidable absence is one where a reasonable parent would not have been expected to send their child to school.
- 3.2 An example of an unavoidable absence is when the child is ill enough to be unfit to take part in learning at the School.

### 4 Authorising absence

- 4.1 The School has the duty of recording pupil attendance and absence, and of classifying every absence as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This decision is solely that of the School, and not of the parent [DFE, School Attendance (1994) §21].

### 5 Authorised absences

- 5.1 The School will decide that a pupil has had an authorised absence if that pupil has been away for a good reason: normally, because of illness, or because the School has granted, to the child's parents, in exceptional circumstances, leave of absence for the child.

## 6

### Unauthorised absences

- 6.1 Unauthorised absences are those which the School does not consider reasonable and for which no leave of absence has been given.
- 6.2 Examples of unauthorised absences are: keeping children off School for trivial reasons; truancy; absences which have never been properly explained; children who arrive at School too late to get a mark; shopping; minding the house; being kept off School as a treat.
- 6.3 The provision of an absence note by a parent may not be sufficient if the reason for the child's absence is not 'unavoidable'.

## 7

### Encouragement to attend regularly

- 7.1 Any problem regarding attendance is best sorted out, very quickly, by the pupil, parents, and School.
- 7.2 It is never better to cover up a child's absence, or to give in to pressure to excuse the child from School. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter, and may make the problem worse.
- 7.3 If there are problems, parents should contact the School – the child's Form Tutor or Head of Year will normally be the best first contacts.
- 7.4 Some parents may prefer to contact the Local Education Authority's Education Welfare Officer (EWO) (see Section 9 of this document).

## 8

### Truancy

- 8.1 Truancy occurs when a child is absent from School without the support or encouragement of his or her parents.
- 8.2 Truancy may occur for whole sessions, or for periods of time less than a whole School session.
- 8.3 Truancy does not necessarily involve the child failing to be on, or leaving, the School premises: a child may absent himself or herself from certain lessons, and hide elsewhere on the School premises.
- 8.4 The School will act in a determined manner to prevent truancy, and will endeavour to solve any problem leading to truancy, in partnership with the parents and the child.
- 8.5 If, however, parents condone, collude with the child in, or even initiate, absence without good reason, this becomes a legal matter, and persistent failure to act responsibly by parents may become the subject of proceedings.

## 9 The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

- 9.1 The EWO is employed by the Local Education Authority, but is attached to a number of Schools: she is, therefore, independent of the School, but a deeply trusted officer to whom parents and the School may turn when a child is experiencing attendance or other problems.
- 9.2 The EWO will try to resolve a pupil's attendance problems by agreement between the parties concerned but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, the EWO can use court proceedings to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child, or to prosecute parents.
- 9.3 The EWO has access to the School's Registers at all times.
- 9.4 The School's current EWO is Mrs Susan Rossington; her telephone number is (01536) 533930.

## 10 If a child is ill

- 10.1 If a child is ill, and unfit to take part in learning at the School, parents should contact the School on the first day of the child's absence, either in person or by telephone (Years 7, 8, and Sixth Form: Wellingborough (01933) 222039; Years 9, 10, 11: Wellingborough (01933) 222793).
- 10.2 When the child returns to School, he or she must bring a written note signed by the parent, stating the reason for absence, and the dates of absence.
- 10.3 If the child's illness is very serious, the School appreciates being kept informed of the child's progress, and will endeavour to meet reasonable requests for work to be done by the child at home.

## 11 In case of family emergency

- 11.1 Where serious family emergencies (for example, sudden bereavement) make the attendance of the child at School very difficult, parents should contact the School as soon as possible, and request leave of absence for the child.
- 11.2 The School will consider carefully requests for leave of absence for other special family occasions (for example, attending the graduation ceremony of an older brother or sister).

## 12 Unavoidable Medical appointments

- 12.1 Where medical, dental or other appointments must be in School time, parents should contact the School as soon as possible, and request leave of absence for the child.
- 12.2 Either a parental note, or other evidence (for example, an appointment card clearly stating the child's name and time of appointment) will be required before the School can record the child's absence as authorised.

## 13 Holidays

- 13.1 In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, a pupil may, on application by the parent with whom he or she normally resides, be granted up to ten School days leave of absence to go away on holiday. The school asks parents to carefully consider before booking a holiday in term-time.
- 13.2 All holiday leave during term time is granted solely at the discretion of the Headteacher.
- 13.3 Request for holiday leave must be made by the parent, either by letter or using one of the School's Holiday Forms (see Appendix 3). It is suggested that such a request should be made at least one term in advance, and before booking a holiday.
- 13.4 Leave may be refused if the child's attendance otherwise has been unsatisfactory, or where the child has already missed a lot of schoolwork. Leave will definitely be refused where the holiday would coincide with, or affect, examinations, SATs, or other crucial events in the school year.
- 13.5 Requests for leave of absence in excess of 10 school days in any one School year will only be granted in the most exceptional circumstances.

## 14 Extraordinary requests for leave of absence

- 14.1 The School endeavours to respond sensitively to situations where a child is an effective carer for a seriously ill parent, and will normally involve the Education Welfare Officer in the management of such situations.
- 14.2 The School will consider carefully requests by parents for leave of absence for their child to take part in national or international sports teams, entertainment,, film or television work. The School will consider the educational and welfare implications of such requests, as well as questioning whether the necessary licences and permits have been issued by external bodies.

## 15

### Registration

- 15.1 As required by law, the School takes an attendance register of every pupil twice a day: at the beginning of the morning session, and at the beginning of the afternoon session.
- 15.2 Teachers in charge of every lesson during each School day are also required to electronically record attendance, and to report pupils who fail to attend their lessons.
- 15.3 The codes used for recording attendance in registers are given in Appendix 2.

## 16

### Lateness

- 16.1 Children must attend on time to be given a mark for the session, unless the lateness is unavoidable. It is the duty of parents to ensure that children are present at registration.
- 16.2 A child is late if he or she is not present for registration at 8.50 in the morning and 2.25 in the afternoon (i.e. at the start of lesson 5).
- 16.3 The register takes a few moments to complete and pupils are expected to arrive on time.
- 16.4 If the child arrives late, they must go immediately to the main School Office on their School Site, and sign the 'Late List', giving their name, form, time of arrival, and the reason for their lateness. The attendance register will later be marked with a letter L denoting late arrival.
- 16.5 Pupils arriving late should proceed to their lesson after signing in.
- 16.6 Form Tutors and Heads of Year note those pupils who are frequently or persistently late, and take appropriate action to help the pupils to improve their punctuality.

## 17

### The Attendance Officer

- 17.1 The school has an attendance officer whose role is to support each Head of Year and tutors in monitoring the attendance of pupils, and in making contact with the parents of those pupils who have unexplained absences. He will issue termly excellent attendance awards and produce two weekly attendance statistics for the pastoral team.
- 17.2 The Attendance officer may contact parents by telephone, or by letter: .
- 17.3 The current Attendance Officer Is Mr J Cardy and he can be contacted on 01933 222793.

## 18 Recognition of good attendance

- 18.1 Heads of Year write to the parents of pupils who have achieved 100% attendance during the School Year.
- 18.2 Other rewards and recognition of good attendance may be used, as appropriate. The school is keen to celebrate it's good attendance record and a new system of recognition by termly certificate began in summer 2006.

## 19 Publication of attendance figures

- 19.1 The School has the legal duty to publish its attendance and absence figures.
- 19.2 The School records each individual pupil's attendance figures in the annual formal School Report.
- 19.3 The School's absence rates are published annually by the Government.
- 19.4 The Governors of the School, in consultation with the staff, set targets for the continued reduction of rates of unauthorised absence.

## 20 Examination times

- 20.1 Pupils approaching mock or full public examinations are given clear guidance by the Examinations Officer about procedures for attendance during examinations.
- 20.2 During public examinations pupils attend only for examinations, and are registered through that attendance.

## 21 The School's Admission Register

- 21.1 In accordance with the law, every pupil of Wrenn School appears not only on the sessional attendance register, but also on the School's Admission Register, which is kept on computer by the Computer Administration Manager.
- 21.2 Once entered onto the Admission Register, the child's name may be removed only if he or she has:
  - 21.2.1 reached the statutory school leaving age;
  - 21.2.2 died;
  - 21.2.3 been permanently excluded, the proper procedures for permanent exclusion having been completed;
  - 21.2.4 been registered at another school, and that school has formally notified Wrenn School of that fact;

- 21.2.5 been withdrawn by his or her parent, to be educated – otherwise, and the parent has formally notified the Headteacher in writing. In such a case, the Local Education Authority will be informed, via the EWO, and the date from which the child's name will be deleted from the Admission Register will be agreed with the EWO;
- 21.2.6 ceased to attend and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the School;
- 21.2.7 failed to return within a further two weeks of a holiday which was longer than the customary two weeks maximum. In such a case, every reasonable effort will be made, through the EWO, to ascertain the whereabouts of the child, before deleting his or her name from the Admission Register;
- 21.2.8 been absent for four weeks and both the School and the LEA have failed to locate the child at his or her last known address.
- 21.2.9 been absent from School for over four weeks because of detention in secure accommodation following a final court order, or order of recall.

## APPENDICES

- 1 THE SCHOOL DAY  
The times of the normal School day, including official deadlines for pupil late arrival.
- 2 RECORDING ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE IN THE REGISTERS  
The codes for recording attendance and absence currently used.
- 3 HOLIDAY FORM.
- 4 ABSENCE FOR MORE THAN THREE SCHOOL DAYS  
Pro-forma letter which may be used by the school attendance officer.
- 5 UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL  
Pro-forma letter which may be used by the school attendance officer.
- 6 Example of attendance certificate.

### **SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR THIS DOCUMENT**

- Collins, David An Absent-Minded Policy? (Management in Education, Vol. 11, No. 3, June/July 1997, pages 23-24).
- DEE The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (DEE, 1995; S.I. No. 2089).
- DES Circular 11/91 The Education (Pupils' Attendance Records) Regulations 1991 (DES, 11 July 1991).
- DFE School Attendance: Policy and Practice on Categorisation of Absence (DFE, 1994).
- DfEE Circular 11/97 School Leaving Date for 16 Year Olds (DfEE, 15 September 1997).
- DfEE The Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 1997 (DfEE, December 1997, S.I. No. 2624).
- HMI Education Observed 13: Attendance at School (DES, 1989).
- Whitney, Ben Effective Registration (Croner Head Teacher's Bulletin, Issue 30, September 1997, pages 3-16).
- Whitney, Ben Family Holidays in Term Time (Croner Head's Legal Guide, Issue 108, 25 November 1996, pages 5-6).