

WHITCHURCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Aims

1. To maximise the time that children spend in school
2. To minimise disruption to teachers' plans resulting from the need to assist children who have missed lessons
3. To minimise disruption to classes through late arrivals

2. Introduction

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

2.2 Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance should be discussed between the school, the parents and the child.

2.3 Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (NOT by parents) as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Information about the cause of absence must therefore be provided, by email, phone or writing. Authorised absences are periods away from school for good reasons such as illness or other unavoidable cause. Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy
- Term time holidays
- Absences which are not satisfactorily explained
- Children who arrive too late at school to be marked as present

2.4 Parents are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way the school may refer the child to the County Attendance Team. The County Attendance Team 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.

2.5 Parents may wish to contact the County Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their contact details are available from the school office and the Local Authority.

3. Procedures

3.1 The school applies the following procedures for dealing with individual absences:

- Parents are required to inform the school either in writing, email or by phone if a child is or will be absent by 9am on or before the first day of absence.
- If the school hasn't been provided with a reason why a child is absent the school office will attempt to contact parents as soon as is deemed necessary that morning.
- If the school is unable to make any contact with the parents, they will turn to other emergency contacts from the child's list.
- If they are still unable to contact any one from the child's emergency contact list the school will contact Locality Community Support Service (LCSS) for further advice on how to proceed, this may include visiting the home or contacting emergency services/MASH.
- Absence will be authorised for illness and medical appointments and for occasions when the school is unable to open or access to the school is exceptionally difficult (e.g. at times of heavy snow). Absences will also be authorised for exceptional circumstances such as bereavement of a close relative, though it is stressed that discussion with the Head Teacher is appropriate in such circumstances.
- Family holidays should be taken during school holidays, dates for which are published well in advance. The school is unable to authorise term time holidays. Any leave of absence will not be granted during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and in these cases the number of school days a child can be absent, if the leave is granted, will be determined by school. Applications for this must be made in advance by completion of an exceptional leave of absence request form, copies of which are available from the school office.
- All other absences will be recorded as unauthorised unless special permission has been sought from, and granted by, the Head Teacher.

3.2 The procedure for monitoring attendance is as follows:

- The school attendance administrator will record pupil attendance throughout the year and log instances of absence.
- Twice a year, the school attendance administrator will update all parents by email on their child's attendance level to date. Pupils whose attendance is below 95% at this stage will be monitored over the next 6 weeks (as explained in their attendance email) to see if attendance improves.
- At the end of the 6 week monitoring period, the school attendance administrator will notify parents individually by email, informing them whether their child's attendance has improved or declined by that stage of the year. Where attendance has declined, the parent will be informed that attendance

will be monitored for a further 6 weeks in the hope of seeing an improvement. Where a pupil's attendance has improved, this will be acknowledged.

- If attendance continues to be an issue after another 6 weeks, a letter/email will be sent by the Head Teacher requesting a meeting with the parent/carer and an action plan will be put in place with a two week target.
- If the Action Plan is not successful a further letter/email will be sent and a referral to the County Attendance Team will be made which could lead to fast-track prosecution.

3.3 The school attendance administrator will review reasons for absence and letters written will reflect this review process, taking into account families' and children's particular circumstances.

3.4 The County Attendance Team may check the attendance and lateness records and highlight concerns for the school to address.

3.5 The above procedure will also be applied to persistent late arrivals (taking into account individual family circumstances.)

3.6 Lateness will also be recorded as unauthorised unless the school has been informed of, and agreed to authorise, the reasons given. All late arrivals must report to the school office.

3.7 This Policy is designed to help all concerned adults to enable children to attend school regularly and thus be offered the most consistent access to learning as is possible.

3.8 The school will maintain records of individual and collective attendance/punctuality to provide internal and external evaluation of performance.

3.9 The school may use its discretion in applying this procedure, where exceptional circumstances impact on whole school attendance (e.g. global pandemic)

4. Promoting positive attendance

4.1 The school will provide a whole school attendance figure to parents and regularly reinforce the importance of good attendance in its weekly newsletter.

4.2 The school will celebrate good attendance by congratulating pupils in an email when carrying out attendance monitoring.

4.3 The class with the best overall attendance at the end of each week will be rewarded with guardianship of the 'Attendance Armadillo' for the following week. The weekly winners will also be announced in the newsletter.

5. Pupils at risk of/with persistent absence

5.1 Any pupils at risk of or with persistent absence will be considered on a case by case basis to take full account of their home circumstances.

5.2 For these pupils the school may;

- arrange meetings with parents to discuss possible issues
- make regular contact with families to discuss progress
- use ELSA sessions to support pupils
- provide tailored support when pupils attend/arrive on time
- engage with local authorities and other external agencies where appropriate

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Responsibility for implementation of this policy rests with the Head Teacher and the School Attendance Administrator.

7. Review

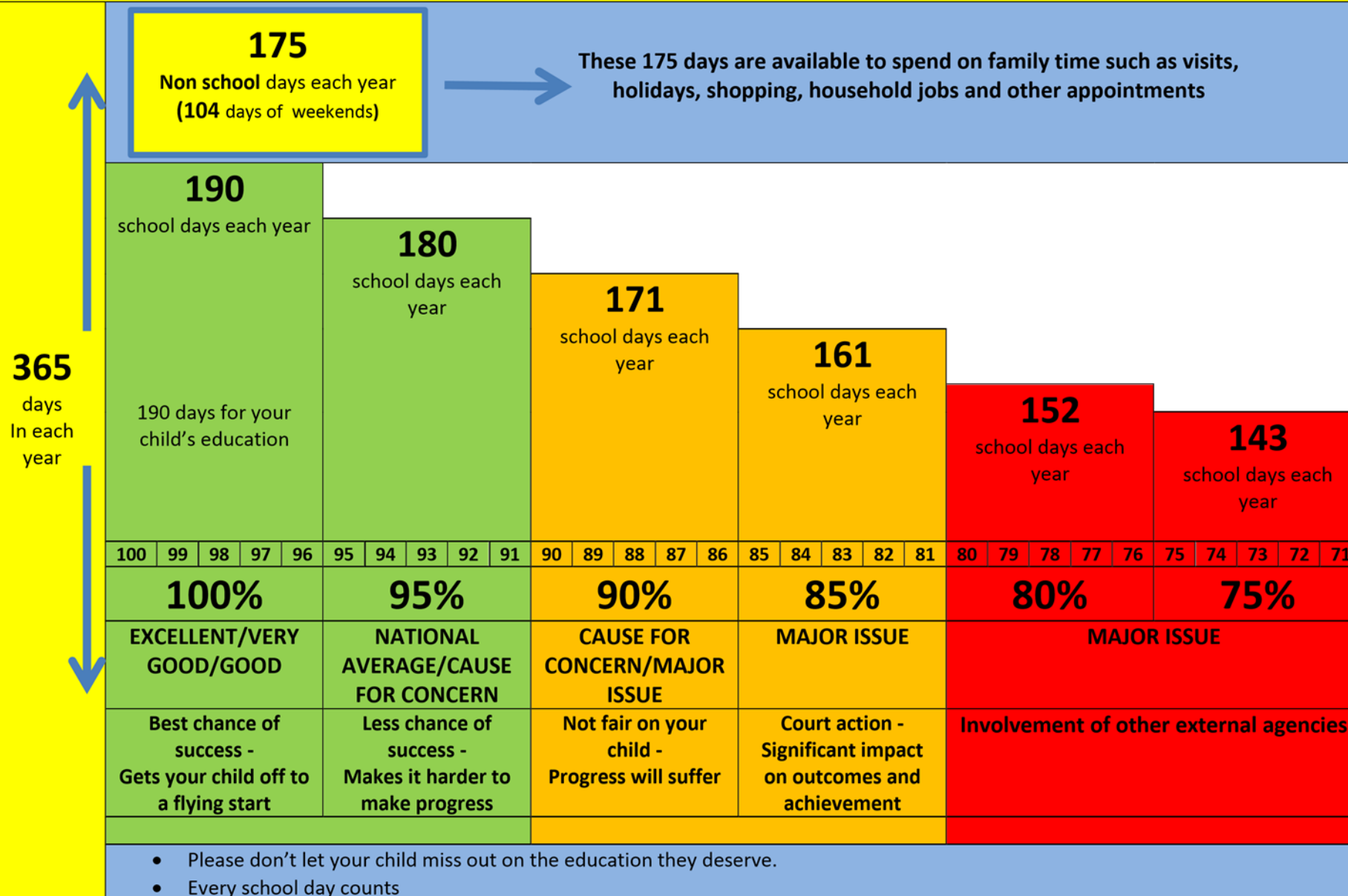
7.1 Update December 2022: School staff will review this policy when there is a significant change in regulation or guidance or when governors identify an area for school improvement that is covered by the policy. This will be reported to the Curriculum Committee.

Status of this Policy: Updated December 2022

Lead contributions from: Dawn Chesters, Karen Ridley

Staff: Dawn Chesters/ Karen Ridley
Governors: Curriculum Committee

Days off school add up to lost learning!



Here are some basic reminders about attendance.

- We all feel in our comfort zone if our child is achieving a high percentage in tests and examinations. 80% in a test is generally excellent news! The danger is that we may feel the same way about attendance until it is explained.
- If a child has an attendance percentage of **80%** then this is equivalent to **missing a whole day every single week**

	One year in school is equivalent to 950 1 hour long lessons Five years in school is equivalent to 4750 1 hour long lessons Eleven years in school is equivalent to 10450 1 hour long lessons And all of this comes down to set of grades on a sheet of paper in an envelope				
Attendance %	Missed Days	Missed weeks	Over 5 years	Annually	Impact over 5 years
100%	0	0	0	Excellent	
99%	1.9	0.38	9.5	Very Good	
98%	3.8	0.76	19	Very Good	
97% ¹	5.7	1.14	28.5	Very Good	
96%	7.6	1.52	38	Good	
95% ²	9.5	1.9	47.5	National average	Quarter Year missed
94%	11.4	2.28	57	Below Nat. average	
93%	13.3	2.66	66.5	Below Nat. average	Approx. Third year missed
92%	13.3	2.66	66.5	Requires improvement	
91%	17.1	3.42	85.5	Requires immediate improvement/worrying	
90% ³	19	3.8	95	Cause for concern	Half year missed
89%	20.9	4.18	104.5	Serious concern	
85% ⁴	28.5	5.7	142.5	Major issue	
80% ⁵	38	7.6	190	Major issue	1 Year missed

¹ 97% and above – pupils with attendance at this level throughout their school career, will make the most progress and this should lead to better prospects for work, college and university.

² 95% - pupils with attendance at this level should reach their target grades and should have good prospects and opportunities for work, college and university but they are just below the national average rate of attendance

³ 90% - pupils with attendance at this level are missing a month of school per year and are likely not to reach their target grades. Progress will be negatively affected and their attendance will be viewed negatively by employers, further and higher education.

⁴ 85% - pupils with this attendance will find it very difficult to keep up and their chances of achieving their potential will be significantly damaged

⁵ Any attendance percentage below this will make it impossible for pupils to keep up with the work.

