# Wombridge Primary School

# Attendance Policy




| | |
|---|---|
| Date of last review: | October 2026 |
| Date of policy review: | October 2027<br>(or sooner should guidance change) |

## Safeguarding Statement

At our school, we recognise that regular attendance is essential to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. We believe that children can only achieve their full educational potential when they attend school regularly, on time, and are fully engaged in learning.

Poor attendance may be an indicator that a child is experiencing difficulties or vulnerabilities at home, within the community, or in relation to their physical or emotional wellbeing. As such, attendance is closely monitored as part of our safeguarding responsibilities. Any concerns regarding attendance, punctuality, or patterns of absence will be considered in the context of the child's overall welfare and may result in discussions with parents/carers, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or other relevant professionals.

The school is committed to working in partnership with families and external agencies to identify and address any barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity. Where attendance concerns persist, appropriate support and intervention will be offered to ensure that children are safe, supported and able to access their education.

All staff share a responsibility for promoting good attendance and maintaining a culture where every child feels safe, valued, and encouraged to attend school every day.

Every child has the right to feel safe, belong, and achieve. Good attendance is a key factor in supporting these outcomes.

## Our Aims

The aim of this policy is to promote excellent attendance and punctuality for all pupils, ensuring that every child can access their full entitlement to education and achieve their potential. Through a positive and supportive approach, the school seeks to:

- Promote a culture where good attendance and punctuality are valued by pupils, families and staff.
- Ensure all children attend school regularly and on time so that they can fully participate in learning and school life.
- Maximise educational achievement, progress and attainment by reducing absence from school.
- Develop positive habits and attitudes towards attendance that will support children throughout their education and into adulthood.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers to identify and overcome barriers to

attendance at the earliest opportunity.

- Provide timely support and intervention for pupils whose attendance causes concern.
- Ensure attendance is monitored effectively and consistently across the school.
- Fulfil the school's safeguarding responsibilities by recognising that poor attendance may be an indicator of vulnerability, neglect, or welfare concerns.
- Promote the wellbeing, safety and inclusion of all pupils by ensuring they remain connected to their education, peers and trusted adults.
- Meet statutory requirements and expectations relating to school attendance.

Our school actively promotes and encourages 100 % attendance for all our children and we are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through a whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance.

This policy has been updated in line with the latest statutory guidance for schools and local authorities 'Working together to improve school attendance. August 2024'. If you need any help in accessing this document, please email A2112@telford.gov.uk

## Attendance and Punctuality Expectations of Children and Parents

- The main gates open at 8.25 am for all children.
- Children in reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are expected to be in class for

  8.45am to start their day's learning.
- Gates close promptly at 8.50am, any children arriving after this time will be recorded as late (code L).
- Once the main gate is locked, children must enter the school building via the school office using the pedestrian entrance. A member of the school office team will walk down to collect the child, once the parent/carer has used the intercom.
- You must remain with your child until a member of staff arrives.
- There is an expectation that you will provide a reason for your child's late arrival.
- If children arrive after 9.15am, registers are closed, and they will be recorded with a 'U' code which indicates an unauthorised absence.

Each school day is made up of two sessions, and attendance registers are taken at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions.

Punctuality is important. Teachers plan early morning activities to revisit and reinforce previous learning, helping pupils to consolidate their understanding and prepare for the day ahead. Arriving on time ensures that children feel included, settle quickly into

classroom routines, and begin the day alongside their peers. Consistent routines can also support emotional regulation and reduce the likelihood of dysregulated behaviour.

Conversely, arriving late can be disruptive to learning, may affect a child's confidence and wellbeing, and can contribute to feelings of anxiety or disengagement from school.

The school's attendance provision is overseen by **Mrs Solomon (Headteacher)**. Miss Partridge who is the school's **Attendance Champion/DSL and SENCO** is supported by **Mrs Loxley (Office Administrator)** in the school office for daily attendance monitoring. Parents and carers can contact the attendance team via the school office. The school also employs an **Education Welfare Officer (EWO)** to support good attendance.

## What you should do if your child is absent:

If you know your child will not be in school, parents and carers have responsibility to inform school of the absence by 9.30am. Parents can phone the school office on **01952 388040.** This absence will then be recorded on our registers.

If no contact has been made or there is concern about the reason for absence then:

- we will continue to contact by text, phone or email
- this will be repeated on following days of absence, especially if no contact has been received;
- a home visit may be made by the EWO or other school staff as directed by the head teacher
- a home visit may also be made even if contact has been received if there are other/wider concerns particularly if those concerns centre around health or wellbeing of the child or if there is a pattern of absence.
- If we believe there are safeguarding concerns that need to be raised, then contact may be made with supporting professionals such as social workers or with **Family Connect (01952 3853865).**

**We will always put our duty of care to your child first.**

## Celebrating and promoting good attendance

At Wombridge, we recognise and statistics show that children who attend school regularly achieve more, make stronger progress, develop positive relationships, and establish good habits that will support them throughout their lives. We therefore place a strong emphasis on celebrating and promoting good attendance through a range of rewards and recognition activities.

Attendance figures are calculated weekly and classes compete for the best attendance and punctuality across both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. At the end of each week, the classes with the highest attendance and best punctuality are awarded a treat e.g. extra play, time spent on the scooters, raffle tickets to be in the draw for a prize and class trophies.

At the end of each half term, certificates are awarded to pupils who have achieved 100%, 98-98% and 97% attendance.

We also celebrate pupils who have made significant improvements in their attendance, recognising the effort made by children and families to overcome barriers and increase school attendance. Attendance is discussed during parents' evenings to ensure that parents and carers are aware of their child's attendance record and can work in partnership with the school where support is needed.

The impact of these initiatives is reviewed half termly. By promoting a positive culture around attendance and recognising both excellent and improving attendance, the school aims to reduce persistent absence and ensure that all pupils benefit fully from their education.

## What you can expect from Wombridge

Regular attendance is fundamental to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to achieve their potential and make the most of their time in school. At our school, we strive to create a positive, inclusive and nurturing environment where children feel safe, valued and motivated to attend every day.

We understand that attendance difficulties can arise for a variety of reasons, and we are committed to working alongside families to identify and address any barriers to attendance as early as possible. Members of the Senior Leadership Team and Inclusion Team are available each day to offer advice, support and guidance to children and families. If a child experiences difficulties settling into school, separating from their parent or carer, or entering the classroom at the start of the day, staff will work sensitively with the family to provide appropriate support. In the first instance, parents and carers are encouraged to speak with their child's class teacher.

Our school offers a strong Early Help provision, recognising that timely support can make a significant difference to a child's wellbeing, attendance and overall success in school. **Miss Partridge** is our **Safeguarding & Inclusion Manager** and will be available to meet with families to discuss concerns and explore the support that may be available.

Together, we will identify strengths, challenges and practical strategies that can help improve outcomes for children and families.

We firmly believe that effective partnerships between home and school lead to the best outcomes for children. Where additional support is required, we can work with and access a range of external agencies and professionals, including health services, family support workers, educational specialists, housing services and other community-based organisations.

Our approach is flexible and tailored to the individual needs of each child and family. We recognise that every family's circumstances are unique and therefore do not adopt a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. By working together, we aim to ensure that all children feel supported, attend school regularly and are able to thrive both academically and socially.

## Using data to improve school attendance

Our attendance target is 96% and we expect children to arrive on time before 8.50am every day.
School staff hold weekly attendance review meetings with the EWO and consider any child with attendance under 92% or if there are patterns of lateness of absence. At every review, if the child's attendance has decreased since the last review meeting, appropriate actions are considered. This could include:

- monitoring
- contacting the parent/carer by phone or letter
- inviting the parent/carer to a meeting
- drawing up an action plan for supporting the family
- referring for support services where necessary

If the child is on the SEN register, any meetings may be held with the SENDCO **Miss Partridge**. If children's attendance is 90% or below, they are classed (by the Government) as persistently absent, if they have attendance 50% or below, they are classed as severely absent. We will Identify if there are particular groups of children whose absences are a cause for concern. We can then put in place measures to monitor and support these groups of children. We look at **Wombridge** data together with local and national attendance data and share with the Governing board termly. Children are legally required to attend school from the term after their fifth birthday.

**If a parent is thinking about electively home educating their child, we would suggest they look at the Telford and Wrekin website –**

**https://www.telford.gov.ufi/info/20025/school_information/3353/elective_home_educat ion_ehe.**

**OR The Education Welfare Officer can be contacted for advice on home education via the school office.**

## Reducing absence

Children are recognised as needing to attend school for at least 96% in order to make good progress.

Persistent absence is where a child misses 10% or more of school and severe absence is where a child misses 50% or more of school. We hold regular attendance reviews every three weeks and look at every child's attendance.

Parents are responsible for their child's education and are required by law to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

- Failure to do so is an offence under s444 Education Act 1996.
- We will phone or send a letter to parents and carers to inform them of the attendance. If appropriate an Attendance Concern Meeting can be offered.
- Parents may be invited to attend an Attendance Support Meeting; parents can also request such a meeting.
- If attendance does not improve a further letter will be sent. This letter may require parents to provide proof of contact with medical professionals if reasons for absence are given as illness or are health related. Parents are encouraged to download the NHS app, which makes it much easier and quicker to provide confirmation of medical absences.
- If attendance still does not improve a further letter will be sent, at this stage proof for reasons of absence will be requested, to authorise absences.
- Where attendance remains a concern despite support being offered or if there is a lack of engagement, the case may be referred to the Local Authority who may consider it appropriate to send a First or Final Warning, depending on previous attendance concerns.
- If concerns remain after a warning notice has been sent, then the parents and carers may be invited to attend an 'Interview under Caution' which may lead to prosecution under s444 Education Act and ultimately a criminal record.
- Alternatively, unauthorised absences may be subject to the Penalty Notice Framework as set out below.

There is statutory guidance **'Working Together to Improve School Attendance (WTTISA - July 2026)'** and this emphasises a supportive ethos. We will always endeavor to support families where we can and look at how we can reduce lateness and absences.

**Holidays and extended periods of leave during term time will not be authorised unless exceptional circumstances apply.**

The school is committed to working with families to promote excellent attendance and will always seek to support parents and carers in ensuring that children attend school regularly and benefit fully from their education.

At **Wombridge Primary School**, we know that regular attendance is essential for children to achieve their full potential. We therefore encourage parents and carers to arrange family holidays and other planned absences during the 13 weeks of school holiday periods wherever possible.

The school will not normally authorise holidays or extended periods of leave during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. All requests for leave of absence will be considered on an individual basis, taking into account the specific circumstances of each case and the impact on the child's education.

Parents and carers wishing to request leave during term time must submit a written application to the Headteacher **3 weeks** in advance of the proposed absence. The Headteacher will determine whether the circumstances presented are exceptional and whether the leave can be authorised. You may be asked to provide the Headteacher with documentation to support the application.

You will receive a reply letter from the school informing you of the Headteacher's decision. We strongly advise you **do not** book/make travel plans until in receipt of the decision.

Unauthorised leave taken during term time may result in the school referring the case to **Telford & Wrekin Council** for consideration under the National Framework for Penalty Notices. In line with government regulations introduced from **19 August 2024 (updated July 2026)**, and implemented by **Telford & Wrekin** from **1 September 2024**, penalty notices may be issued where a child has an unauthorised leave of absence from school.

'Parents should always apply to the Headteacher for any request for leave in term time by completing a request form available from the school office. (DfE guidance states schools may not authorise leave retrospectively so any leave in term time taken without a request being submitted will be unauthorised absence).'

In developing and publishing the new national framework, the Government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors and Headteacher of Wombridge support this and students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. The DfE Guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance (WTTISA July 2026) states that: Generally, **the DfE does not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. (Paragraph 38.)**

## Penalty Notices

In July 2026 the DfE reviewed and amended the 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' statutory guidance. This guidance sits alongside the 'National Framework for Penalty Notices' which the Government introduced in August 2024 and 'The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024' and the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007.

In Telford & Wrekin it is the delegated responsibility of the Attendance Support Team to issues Penalty Notices following referrals from schools, and only they can issue Penalty Notices relating to school absence.

It is only the Headteacher (or delegated member of School Staff) who has the discretion to authorise any request for leave in term time and it is also they that decide the duration of that leave. Parents must submit a request for leave in term time to the school, allowing ample time for consideration to be given. Any circumstances that parents wish to be considered should be included in the request. Holidays should not be booked before permission is granted. The legislation does not allow for any school to adopt a blanket ban, all requests for leave in term time will be considered to determine if there are exceptional circumstances and parents must be notified of that decision.

The government introduced changes in legislation from August 2024 that parents need to be aware of:

- If your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-school week rolling period, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice. These 10 sessions may include any unauthorised absence, including leave in term time and sessions do not have to be consecutive.

- If in an individual case the local authority believes a Penalty Notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met, so for eight sessions of unauthorised absence. This might apply for example, when parent(s) are deliberately or purposefully avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for events such as birthdays and taking their child out of school, or when there are only four pupil days in school and the fifth day is for example a PD Day or bank holiday.

- Penalty Notices increased to £160 from August 2024. This can be reduced to £80 but only for the first Penalty Notice issued, if paid within 21 days – this reduction does not apply to any subsequent Penalty Notice.

- Any 2nd Penalty Notice, to the same parent for the same child, issued within three years of the date of the first Penalty Notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160

- A third Penalty Notice will not be issued within a three-year rolling period, to the same parent for the unauthorised absence of the same child, - alternative action or legal measures will be utilised for subsequent offences.

- Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and should only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. as is usually the case for an unauthorised holiday in term time).

- In some circumstances a 'Notice to Improve' may be issued – However, a Notice to Improve will only be used in cases where support is appropriate. They will not be issued in cases of unauthorised leave in term time for holidays, where information for parents is included in schools' attendance policy and on school's website, or a warning by the school that a Penalty Notice could be issued if unauthorised leave in term time is taken will suffice.

'Parents should always apply to the Headteacher for any request for leave in term time by completing a request form available from the school. DfE guidance states schools should not authorise leave retrospectively so any leave in term time taken without a request being submitted will be unauthorised absence.'

Please follow the links below for more detailed information:

Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/back-into-school/resources-for-families/