

Black Country Wheels School

“Wheels, putting young people first”

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BLACK COUNTRY WHEELS SCHOOL

**DfE Registration Number 333/6003
Unique Reference Number 137571**

Attendance, Punctuality and Absence Policy

**Adopted September 2012
Date of Last Review: October 2019
Next Review: September 2020**

Company Registration No. 06608327

Registered Charity No. 1157795

Unit 3/4, Gainsborough Industrial Trading Estate,
Rufford Road, Stourbridge, DY9 7ND.
Telephone: 0121 522 3717

Introduction:

Black Country Wheels is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at our provision, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Black Country Wheels is committed to the provision of a full, rich and appropriate education for all of its students and acknowledges that education is vital to raising the aspirations of all students.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Learning: - Any absence affects the pattern of a student's education and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at our school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from any education setting without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding: - Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, we will adhere to 'Working together to Safeguard Children' (July 2018) Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2018) and School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy:

Protecting children from maltreatment.

Preventing impairment of children's health or development.

Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

Taking action to enable all children have the best life chances.

Detecting early support through Early Help Assessment.

Aims and Objectives

- Black Country Wheels aim's and objectives drive our commitment to establish and maintain levels of attendance at a rate comparable and above the recommendation from OfSTED.
- You and your child have an important part to play in ensuring that we achieve our targets and remain a provision that ensure our students take full advantage of their educational opportunities by regular, punctual attendance.
- We will ensure that our policy and procedures on attendance and punctuality are regularly reviewed to ensure they are effective and applied consistently in practice.
- We will ensure that registers are completed accurately, to provide reliable data, which will be used to identify those students whose attendance level is likely to impact on their ability to fulfil their potential and achieve their predicted attainment level.
- We will ensure that any student, who has reached or is at risk of moving towards the

national Persistent Absence level of 90% and below, is given priority. We will target our resources to identify barriers to these students' school attendance and ensure students and parents are supported to find a resolution.

- We will ensure that we promote a whole-school approach to the management of attendance, with all members of our school community committed to their role and confident of their ability to make an effective and positive contribution to all students.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of the school community.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our newsletter;
- Report to you at least half-termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Recognise the need to reward school attendance and implement a number of strategies such as award of merits, positive point and prize draws to reflect weekly attendance, termly attendance, annual attendance and punctuality.

The Law relating to attendance;

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-*

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

The Law relating to safeguarding;

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (**not by the parents**), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a good reason, like illness or medical/dental appointments and emergencies which unavoidably fall in school time.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or enforcement proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off away from the provision unnecessarily
- truancy during the agreed timetable
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at the provision after their specified start time
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time.
- Absence from individual lessons – should your child be present for registration but then fail to attend subsequent lessons (without permission) school reserve the right to amend the register code for that school session to unauthorised to reflect lesson absence. In the event of this happening parents would be notified by telephone and/or letter by 1st class post on the same school day.

Whilst any student may be absent from school due to illness, we recognize that sometimes they can be reluctant to attend their education setting for a variety of reasons.

Any problems with regular attendance are best addressed between the school, the parents and the student. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is **never** better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending.

This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and will nearly always make the situation worse.

Any student at Black Country Wheels identified as having **attendance below 90%** will have all further absence **unauthorised** on schools register.

However should parent(s) provide evidence from a medical practitioner advising that the period of absence was necessary, the absence for the evidenced period will be authorised.

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

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

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any student's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

Your child is valued within this provision and our commitment and desire to ensure your child achieves their full potential can only be accomplished with your assistance.

We monitor all absence thoroughly and any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also

combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. We will ensure that programmes individual to students needs are developed and implemented where specific issues are identified as a barrier to learning.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence; **at least 15 minutes before your child's agreed start time.**
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us.
- Or, you can call into Black Country Wheels School and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- Telephone you again on the third day if the absence persists. If we are unable to contact you by telephone we will write to you.
- Request our Consultant Attendance Advisor visit your home if your child is identified as having below average attendance, to establish the reason for absence.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Key Stage Leaders. Should your child's absence remain a concern, you will be invited in to meet with the Head teacher or another member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority if we or our attendance consultant are unable to effect improvement.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about varying issues, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed or in a medical emergency we may fail to notify you.

There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year, please ensure yours remains up to date.

The School Attendance Officer:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to assist the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful.

We as a school have an appointed Attendance Officer who will always be happy to meet with you to discuss any concerns you have or that have been identified by school staff.

If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Investigation Service (EIS), a statutory intervention service.

This Service was formerly the Education Welfare Service and where they may previously have tried to resolve the situation, their primary role is now Enforcement Proceedings. Therefore, should school fail to reach a resolution with Parents, and a referral is made for intervention from the Education Investigation Service, the new Service will consider sanctions such as

Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court, based on the evidence provided by the school.

Parents can contact the EIS themselves to ask for guidance on their new procedures. Their telephone number is 01384 814317.

Punctuality:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and is also an offence in law if your child attends their specified education setting after the close of register.

If your child is late at the start of the school day they can miss valuable learning time. They are prevented from spending time with their class teacher which can result in vital information and news for the day not being received.

Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons. This can be embarrassing for the student and can in our experience also encourage absence.

Good routines within the home are essential to assist students in establishing and maintaining punctuality, we rely on Parents to assist their children in formulating routines and any difficulties that Parents have should be brought to schools attention.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at the **specified time on your child's timetable** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers will be completed **within 15 minutes of the agreed start time** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

45 minutes after your child's agreed start time, the register will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice payable up to £120 or prosecution in the Magistrates court if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record (2-3 occasions of late on a weekly basis in a 4 week period) you will be asked to meet with a member of school staff and/or Attendance Consultant to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Should school be unable to resolve a persistent late issue, we reserve the right to bring forward the close of register. This would mean that your child's lateness would be recorded as unauthorised in schools register. This could result in the Local Authority considering enforcement proceedings against you.

Should this course of action be necessary we will inform you verbally (where possible) and in writing.

Holidays in Term Time:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on

holiday and the government made an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 in September 2013 to reflect this.

Leave of absence shall not be granted unless –

- (a) an application has been made in advance to the proprietor by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides: and
- (b) the proprietor, or a person authorised by the proprietor in accordance with paragraph (1), considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

All applications must be made in writing to the Head Teacher/Proprietor at least 5 school days prior to the requested leave date.

Failure to notify and/or request leave of absence in term time, providing at least 5 days notice will result in all absence being unauthorised.

The Head Teacher/Proprietor will only grant leave where parents can prove exceptional circumstances (irrespective of the child's overall attendance). If they agree such leave was an exceptional circumstance, parents will be informed in writing.

On any occasion that school refuses a request for leave in term time, should parent/carers proceed with the leave it will be recorded as a (G) (family holiday not agreed or in excess of agreement), on schools register.

Where a parent takes a leave of absence to which the application was refused or takes a leave of absence where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty fine (upon a return from such leave) by the local authority may be requested. When requesting a penalty fine the school may calculate the period of days taken within a 12 month period.

If a pupil does not return to school after the leave of absence date, school can consider removal from the school register under Regulation 8, 1 (f) of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Managing Reintegration

All pupils are entitled to full time education however in very exceptional circumstances from time to time it is necessary to reintegrate student's, who have been experiencing problem. College staff will identify if and when this is appropriate to do so via a strategy support plan (SSP).

Where a SSP is agreed with parent and student, the Inclusion Team will play an integral part in managing such practice.

When a SSP is agreed with Parent as a solution to support behaviour, SEN, absence and/or truancy, an agreement will be drawn up which will require the signatures of all parties. This is not a long term solution and will be regularly reviewed. Any period of the school day that a student is identified as not being required to attend will be recorded as authorised absence. However where a student fails to attend the required session, will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

We as an alternative provider/college reserve the right to withdraw any reintegration programme at any time.

Managing illness during the school day

If a student is unwell or has an accident and is considered unfit to continue in lessons, they will be asked to report to the main reception for their condition to be assessed. Where necessary parents will be contacted and asked to make arrangements to collect their child.

We will still require parents to complete an absence form or write to the school with regards to the reason for absence.

Education off school site

On occasion students may be involved in educational activities off the school site. Any provision agreed that requires attendance at another site will still be reflected within schools register. Failure to attend any other educational activity will result in an absence on the school register. The coding of the absence will depend on the explanation provided by parents

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff remain committed to working with parents and pupils, and will strive to ensure that as high a level of attendance is achieved for each individual student, to ensure that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

Date of Policy/Review: September 2019

Signed *J O'Leary*
(Head Teacher)

(Please complete and return to Black Country Wheels School)

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the Attendance & Punctuality policy at Black Country Wheels School.

Parent:

Child's Name:

Date: