



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date of Policy: November 2023.
Frequency of Review: Annually.
Date of Next Review: October 2024.

Introduction:

We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our young people to achieve the optimum benefit from their education it is essential that they attend regularly and on time, every day Wize Up is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is extremely important therefore that you make sure that your young person attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we aim to achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of any young persons Wize Schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning and possibly their behaviour. Any young person's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your young persons regular attendance at Wize Up is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from Wize Up without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, young people and all members of Wize Up community.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on non- daily, by making contact with you on the day your young person has not attended for a reason to be provided.
- Report to you at least half-termly on how your young person is performing in Wize Up with their attendance and punctuality rate, it is requested at this point that documentation is provided for any non-attendance unaccounted.
- Termly reports are issued along with attendance and punctuality report showing how this relates to their attainments, documentation is also requested for any non-attendance unaccounted for.
- Celebrate good and improved attendance by displaying individual achievements with the award of young person of the week.
- Reward good or improving attendance through, certificates and outings/events.

Failure to ensure Regular and Punctual School Attendance will put the parent at risk of receiving either of the following:

- £120 Fixed Penalty Notice under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, Or legal action under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 and, more specifically, the meaning of the word “regularly” within the following provision: “If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.”
- Section 444(1) is a strict liability offence.
- There is also a more serious alternative offence, under section 444(1A), which applies where a parent “... knows that his child is failing to attend regularly...” in relation to which a reasonable justification defense exists under section
- 444(1) (b). Under Section 444(8) a person guilty of an offence under subsection (1) is liable on summary conviction to a fine of up to £1,000.
- In respect of subsection (1A), a person guilty of an offence on summary conviction is liable to a fine of up to £2,500, or to go to prison for up to three months, or both.

The purpose of Section 444 is quite plainly to ensure regular attendance, a duty which is imposed on parents by Section 7 of the Act: The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full- time education suitable

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and
- (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from Wize Up has to be classified by Wize Up (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 mornings or afternoons away from Wize Up for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in Wize Up time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

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

- Parents/carers keeping young person off Wize Up unnecessarily
- truancy before or during Wize Up day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- young person who arrive at Wize Up too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other young person or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any young person may be off Wize Up because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend Wize Up. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between Wize Up, the parents and the young person. If your young person 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 usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A young person becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more Wize Schooling across Wize Up year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any young persons educational prospects and personal development and we need parents fullest support and assistance to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. 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 young people are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system in conjunction with the local education authorities (LEA) attendance advisory service, who we regularly meet with during the academic year and we also combine this with extra after Wize Up sessions being offered where absence affects attainment.

Children Missing Education:

New statutory guidance Children missing education - statutory guidance for local authorities (DfE, 2016) was issued by the Department for Education in September 2016. This can be used as non-statutory guidance for schools in relation to pupils who are of statutory school age. There is also guidance specific to schools in Keeping children safe in education (DfE, 2016) in Annex A.

Children missing education are defined in the guidance as “children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.”

Children who are at risk of missing education include:
those at risk of abuse or neglect
missing children and runaways
those who have offended or who are at risk of offending
those who cease to attend school
children of new migrant families.

Children missing education are at significant risk of abuse or may be missing from education as a result of abuse or neglect. They may be vulnerable to child sexual exploitation, forced marriage, female genital mutilation or trafficking. They may also be vulnerable to crime. If a child who is subject to a child protection plan, or where Wize Up already has safeguarding concerns goes missing from education, it should be treated as a safeguarding matter. Agencies involved in a child protection plan should be informed. If there are suspicions of crime or if a child’s safety is at risk, the police should also be informed. In terms of safeguarding, the duties outlined in relation to children missing education are part of the local authority’s wider safeguarding duties.

Wize Ups’ duties are to as part of joint working and information sharing:
monitor the attendance of pupils
inform the Local Authority of pupils who are regularly absent or who have been absent for more than 10 days without permission
notify the Local Authority when a pupil’s name is about to be removed from the register

Absence Procedures:

If your young person is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence if you are unable to speak anyone please ensure that a message is left; or make contact via the parentmailapp;
- 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, if the absence is due to an appointment then documentation must be provided as proof;
- Or, you can call into Wize Up and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your young person is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day and subsequent days of absence if we have not heard from you a non-attendance notification will be emailed over to the referring school and if applicable the relevant agencies i.e. childrens social care with the reasons for non-attendance;

- Send attendance concern letters out, allowing an opportunity for you to provide a reason for any absence we have not yet received a reason for. NOTE: it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to provide reasons for absence in a timely manner, as any absence without this information will receive an UNAUTHORISED absent mark within 5 days;
- Under certain circumstances, arrange a home visit or meeting if absence is over 3 days regardless of the reason/s given;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Young Person Coordinator, Headteacher and potentially the local authority attendance officer if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the LEA Attendance Advisory if attendance moves below 90%.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your young person by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The Education Welfare Officer:

Parents/carers are expected to contact Wize Up at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, Wize Up may refer the young person to the Young person Attendance Officer from the Local Authority. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the young person's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at Wize Up are available from Wize Up or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents/carers or young people may wish to contact the PAO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of Wize Up and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from Wize Up office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your young person misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving young people also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the young person and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

Wize Up day starts at **9.10am** and we expect your young person to be in the communal area at that time.

Registers are marked by **9.35am** and your young person will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **10.10am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your young person 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 if the problem persists.

All young people who arrive on site late without a plausible reason being provided in advance will receive an automatic detention for 1 hour after school.

If your young person has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your young person to Wize Up on time.

Holidays In Term Time:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your young person's Wize Schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking your young person away in Wize Up time.

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

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in Wize Up time to go on holiday.

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/1751):

· In maintained schools and special schools not maintained by a local authority, leave of absence must not be granted unless:

- (a) an application is made in advance to the proprietor/headteacher, and
- (b) the proprietor considers there are exceptional circumstances

"Head teachers should only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If a head teacher grants a leave request, it will be for the head teacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm."

All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of Wize Up a maximum of 10 days in any academic year may be authorised. In making a decision Wize Up will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.

Full details of our policy and procedures are available from Wize Up, but it is important that you understand the circumstances when leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us:

- When a young person is just starting Wize Up. This is very important as your young person needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods, GCSE or any other public examinations.
- When a young person's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a young person's attendance rate is already below (90%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of Wize Up, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

Wize Up has targets to improve attendance and your young person has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this Wize Up is **92%** attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your young person's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our young people can be amongst the best.

Through Wize Up year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided on our website and we ask for your full support.

Mrs Lorretta Boyd, Headteacher
Miss Karlene Thomas, Attendance Officer

Summary:

Wize Up 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 young person attend.

All Wize Up staff are committed to working with parents and young people as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the attendance policy at Wize Up .

Signed by parent:
person:

Signed by young

Young person's Name:

Group:



FAST TRACK TO IMPROVED ATTENDANCE SCHEME

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The **Royal Borough of Greenwich** and **Wize Up Independent School** are following Government guidance and implementing the '**Fast Track**' scheme in this school from September 2012.

The scheme requires that all problems which would affect a pupil's school attendance be dealt with promptly. Therefore, if your child meets the criteria you will be informed by letter and will be required to discuss this matter further with us.

In order to avoid any confusion, if your child is away for legitimate reasons please ensure you follow this guidance:

1. Telephone the school **immediately** on the first day that your child is too ill to attend and follow it up with a letter upon your child's return.
2. Wherever possible make any dentist/doctor/hospital appointments outside of school hours.
3. Do not keep your child away from school if there is an issue in school; contact the school to discuss the problem with a senior member of staff.
4. Do not keep your child away from school for unnecessary reasons, i.e. birthdays, holidays, relatives' visits, shopping trips, your own ill health.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lorretta Boyd', written over a horizontal line.

Lorretta Boyd
Head Teacher

For Information – Failure to ensure regular and punctual school attendance may result in the issuing of a penalty notice under **Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003** and/or prosecution under **section 444 of the Education Act 1996**.