



Wittersham Church of England Primary School

The Street, Wittersham, Tenterden, Kent. TN30 7EA Tel: 01797 270329

office@wittersham.kent.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs Stella Coulson



Attendance Update and Changes for the new academic year 2026/2027

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the end of another academic year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our families for the support you have shown in prioritising attendance and punctuality throughout the year.

We have seen some fantastic improvements in attendance across the school, alongside significant improvements in punctuality for many children. These successes are worth celebrating, as regular attendance remains one of the most important factors in helping children achieve their full potential both academically and socially.

Over the years, I have often spoken about the balance between attendance and wellbeing. We fully understand that children become unwell and that, as parents and carers, you know your children best. We are always grateful for the trust that families place in us to support children throughout the school day, particularly when they may not be feeling 100%.

Recently, however, we have experienced a number of occasions where children have not arrived at school and no communication has been received from home. Whilst we appreciate that mornings can be busy and sometimes chaotic; an unexplained absence quickly becomes a safeguarding matter. Staff must then spend considerable time attempting to contact families and establishing that children are safe and well.

In the spirit of transparency, I would like to make families aware of proposed changes to our attendance procedures from Term 1, which will be presented to the Governing Board for approval at the Full Governing Board meeting on 20th July 2026.

From September, all absences must be reported directly to the school office by telephone or email before 9:00am. Messages sent via ClassDojo to teaching staff, teaching assistants or office staff will no longer be accepted as notification of absence.

Where a child is absent and no reason has been provided, the school will:

- Attempt to contact parents and carers by telephone.
- If no response is received by 9:30am, conduct a home visit carried out by two members of staff.
- If there is no response at the property and we remain unable to establish the child's whereabouts or safety, a safeguarding referral may be made to the Kent County Council Single Point of Access (SPA).

The Single Point of Access is Kent's central safeguarding service. It receives concerns where professionals are unable to confirm a child's welfare and ensures that appropriate checks can be undertaken to establish that a child is safe. Referrals to SPA do not automatically indicate

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wrongdoing by a family; rather, they form part of our statutory safeguarding responsibilities when we cannot account for a child's whereabouts.

As a parent myself, I completely understand that mornings can be busy and that sometimes things do not go according to plan. However, I do not feel it is unreasonable to ask that a quick phone call or email is sent before 9:00am. This not only helps staff manage attendance efficiently but, more importantly, ensures that we can quickly establish that every child in our care is safe.

We have discussed these proposed changes with our Attendance Officer this week, who has reviewed this communication and confirmed that similar procedures are now common practice across many schools.

Should you wish to discuss these changes further, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am always happy to talk through any concerns or questions that families may have.

Thank you once again for your continued support throughout this academic year. I look forward to sharing our updated Attendance Policy with you in the new academic year.

Yours sincerely,

Stella Coulson

Headteacher

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