



# Attendance Policy

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Learning | Effort | Aspiration | Respect | Nurture | Wellbeing

## **Preamble – Attendance during the Covid-19 Pandemic**

The school recognises that attendance will be impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, high attendance remains a vital feature of school life and attendance in person is better in general both for education and wellbeing rather than learning remotely. Therefore, we will continue with our Attendance Policy, but note the following adjustments for the year 2021-22:

1. Where a student is not able to attend school in person due to the requirement to self-isolate or quarantine, but are not themselves unwell, the student will learn remotely and be recorded with the X-code. This will be classed as attending school.
2. Where a student is unwell due to Covid-19, the student will be recorded as absent but this absence will not be included when considering thresholds that lead to intervention (for example see page 7).
3. Some students will be in situations where there is a clear anxiety about attending school, for example if they live with a Critically Extremely Vulnerable family member. In these situations, the parent/carer should contact out Attendance Administrator to arrange an appointment to discuss these concerns. In certain circumstances, the school and family will make an agreement that the family can ask for their child not to attend school in person during times of anxiety eg where there are high cases of Covid in school and/or community. The X-code will be applied during such times and therefore not count as absence. This arrangement will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Ultimately, the decision to put this arrangement in place lies with the Headteacher.
4. Where a child or family is anxious but circumstances in point 3 above do not apply, the school will talk with families about their concerns to explain all the protective measures in place and to identify what else can be put in place to reassure families that school is as safe as possible.
5. During another full lockdown, all students will be registered with an X-code unless they inform the school that they are too unwell to attend remote learning. Attendance at remote live lessons will be recorded and monitored.
6. Governors will not set a target for Attendance in 2021-22 but will continue to monitor attendance levels throughout the year.

## School Philosophy

As a school we value all students and their education equally and seek to promote excellence, personal achievements and the realisation of each student's potential through a broad and balanced range of experience appropriate to the needs of each student. Our approach is underpinned by our LEARN Well values (Learning, Effort, Aspiration, Respect, Nurture, Wellbeing).

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of outstanding attendance for all students. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents/carers the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. This will reflect national attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy contains the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

## Aim

To ensure whole school attendance is at least 95% and Persistent Absenteeism (students with attendance below 90%) is less than 6% of the school population as a whole.

## Rationale

Good attendance is important because:

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

There is a clear link between students' achievement and their level of attendance at school. We all want students to achieve their very best, and for this they need to be in school regularly.

If a student has, for example, 90% attendance at the end of the school year it means they have missed 19 days (4 weeks) of school during the year, and even 96% attendance means 7.5 days of school have been missed.

Charlie Taylor's report in July 2012 for the DfE on improving attendance shows that nationally 73% of students who had attendance over 95% achieved 5 A\*-Cs at GCSE, including English and Maths. Of pupils who miss more than 50% of school, only 3% achieve the same results. Other data suggests that only 40% of children whose attendance is between 91-95% achieve 5 A\*-Cs including English and

Maths and this drops to just about 22% for those whose attendance is between 85-90%. Achieving 5 A\*-C GCSEs can increase wages by 42%.

In 2017-18, Year 11 students at Wood Green School who missed less than 9 days education performed almost 1 grade better in 8 key subjects than those students who missed more than 9 days.

It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends the school where they are on roll. Some pupils and their parents/carers may need to be supported at times in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities. A number of staff and outside agencies have responsibility for ensuring this happens. These are outlined below along with the timeframe for action for students who are regularly absent.

### **Implementation**

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. Only the headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised. When explanations for absence are not felt to be acceptable, the absence will remain unauthorised.

### **Attendance Targets and Interventions**

At the beginning of each school year, via the Wood Green School Weekly Briefing email, all parents will be directed to the Attendance page on the school website <http://wgswitney.org.uk/attendance>. This includes information on how to report absences, a leaflet explaining the importance of good attendance and links to achievement, and the Wood Green School Attendance Policy.

Every student has an attendance target of at least 95% and the Ready to Learn Well Code encourages students to aim for attendance of 98%. The school will promote the importance of this figure to students, parents and staff and will reinforce the message throughout the year.

If attendance is between 85%-95%, tutors will contact parents to discuss this. If a student's attendance is in the low 90% at the end of the next half term, a meeting will be set up with parents to discuss potential barriers to their improvement and set targets to monitor that student's attendance until it rises above 95% again.

If attendance has consistently been below 95% by half-term in the Autumn term, a letter or email will be sent to parents, or a phone call made, explaining that attendance is a serious concern. Attendance will be monitored over a period of time (usually 10 or 20 school days) depending on attendance history, with an expectation that attendance during the monitoring period is at least 95%. A further letter or email may be sent, or a phone call made, after the monitoring period if attendance has not improved and indicating there will be a further monitoring period. Alternatively, a Parenting Contract may be set up straightaway if historic attendance is low. A letter or email may be sent, or a phone call made, if the target has been met.

If attendance does not improve, a letter or email will be sent, or a phone call made, inviting parents into school for a meeting where a Parenting Contract will be drawn up to support the child and the family in improving attendance. If absences are due to illness, parents will also be asked to sign a GP Consent form giving permission for school to contact the GP to get a medical opinion on whether the level of absence is justified or not justified.

An attendance target will be set for a period of time (usually 10 or 20 school days) and the attendance of the student will be reviewed after the monitoring period. Over the period of the Parenting Contract, absence will only be authorised on receipt of medical evidence, such as a doctor's note or prescription. If no medical evidence is provided, the absence will be unauthorised.

If attendance does not improve, a second Parenting Contract may be set up.

If attendance has not improved, we may convene a multi-agency meeting involving school, parents, the student, and possibly LCSS (Locality and Community Support Service), Social Care and the CAT (County Attendance Team) to decide on the next steps. Parents will receive a letter, email or phone call inviting them to this meeting. If attendance drops below 93% later in the school year, a letter or email will be sent and attendance monitored over a period of time. The same procedures would then be followed if attendance does not improve. Alternatively, we may make a referral to the County Attendance Team (CAT) for prosecution.

If a student had poor attendance in the previous school year, the timelines on interventions will be moved forward to earlier in the Autumn Term. Parents or students will be informed early on in the Autumn term that their attendance is being closely monitored.

### **Monitoring**

Every student with poor attendance in the previous year will be allocated a member of staff whose responsibility will be to promote good attendance for the student. For those students with the poorest attendance and likely to need Parenting Contracts, HOYs (Heads of Year), SENCO, or AHT (Assistant Headteacher) may also monitor their attendance.

### **Illness for Years 7-11 Students**

If a student is ill for the day, parents must contact school every day of absence before 9am. The preferred way is by logging into Insight and selecting the 'Attendance' tab and clicking on 'Report Absences'. Alternatively, parents can email [attendance@wgswitney.org.uk](mailto:attendance@wgswitney.org.uk) or contact school on 01993 702355 and select the Absence Line.

If school doesn't receive contact from home regarding absence, we will text the primary contact regarding the absence. If a mobile number isn't available to text, we will phone the primary contact on the landline number provided. If parents don't contact school regarding an absence and do not respond to our texts or phone calls, we will mark the absence as unauthorised.

An email will also be sent to parents who haven't contacted school about an absence, reminding them to inform school first thing in the morning if their child is absent.

We will not normally send a child home who says they feel unwell. The exception would be if we were generally concerned for their well-being. Under no circumstances should a child phone home during the school day to ask a parent to collect them because they feel unwell. Any contact between student and parent during the school day must go through the school office.

For safeguarding reasons, if a student has been absent for 5 school days due to illness, school may ask the parent/carer to bring the child to school to be 'sighted' by a member of staff. Alternatively, they may be asked to provide medical evidence to show the student has been seen by a medical professional, eg doctor's appointment card, prescribed medicine bottle/packaging showing the student's name.

If a student has a long period of absence due to illness, we would stop authorising the absence after a month unless we have a hospital consultant's letter. Once we have the consultant's letter, we can

access support from the Hospital School. If a student's attendance is below 90% we will use our understanding of the student's condition and prior attendance records alongside the available evidence from parents and doctors to decide whether we will continue to authorise absence for illness. If we have no firm medical evidence that there is a reason why the student is absent from school, the absence will no longer be authorised.

### **Illness and Medical/Dental Appointments for 6th Form Students**

If a student is ill for the day, parents must contact school every day of absence before 9am on 01993 899524 (direct line for 6<sup>th</sup> Form), or email [sixthform@wgswitney.org.uk](mailto:sixthform@wgswitney.org.uk)

If school doesn't receive contact from home regarding absence, we will text the primary contact regarding the absence. If a mobile number isn't available to text, we will phone the primary contact on the landline number provided. If parents don't contact school regarding an absence and do not respond to our texts or phone calls, we will mark the absence as unauthorised.

Where possible, parents should try and arrange appointments out of school hours. If this is not possible, please try to arrange them so that your child receives an attendance mark in the morning and in the afternoon so that it doesn't impact their attendance figures.

Parents must inform school in advance if their child has an appointment by contacting the 6<sup>th</sup> Form on 01993 899524, or emailing [sixthform@wgswitney.org.uk](mailto:sixthform@wgswitney.org.uk)

### **Medical/Dental Appointments for Years 7-11 Students**

Where possible, parents should try and arrange appointments out of school hours. If this is not possible, please try to arrange them so that your child receives an attendance mark in the morning and in the afternoon so that it doesn't impact their attendance figures. We may ask for evidence of the appointment, such as an appointment card. We will usually only authorise half a day for a medical or dental appointment.

Parents must inform school in advance if their child has an appointment by contacting the absence line on 01993 702355, reporting it via Insight, or emailing [attendance@wgswitney.org.uk](mailto:attendance@wgswitney.org.uk)

If we do not hear from parents giving permission for a student to leave for an appointment, we cannot let the student leave school.

### **Holidays During Term Time**

As of September 2013, the DfE changed the regulations about term time holidays. Parents no longer have the opportunity to request holiday during term time. Requests for holidays during term time will not be authorised. Parents do not have a legal right to take children out of school on holiday.

Parents/carers will be emailed a Penalty Notice Warning letter at the beginning of the school year. If a child is absent during term time for a holiday, a Penalty Notice may be issued by the County Attendance Team (CAT).

The Penalty is £60 per parent/carer for each child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, increasing to £120 if paid between day 21 and day 28. This amount is prescribed by the Education Penalty Notices (England) Regulations 2007. Failure to pay a Penalty Notice within the prescribed period may result in prosecution for the underlying offence of failure to secure regular school attendance. The issuing of such a notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty fine instead of

being prosecuted for an offence under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

The Headteacher or his representative can receive requests for exceptional circumstances for absence of one or two days, but these will only be authorised if the child's attendance is over 94%. Parents must complete an 'Application Form for Absence during Term Time' in order to request authorisation for absence. Parents must submit their application to the Attendance Officer 4 weeks in advance of the absence requested. A letter will be emailed to parents to let them know the outcome of the application. The application form can be found on the school website – <http://wgswitney.org.uk/perch/resources/request-for-leave-form-ft-1.pdf>

### **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

The only reason why a student should be off school is because they are very unwell, particularly sickness and diarrhoea, and are unable to get through the day. We would encourage parents to send their child into school even if they are feeling a little bit unwell, because of the obvious educational benefits. The exception would be if parents have been advised by a doctor to keep the child off school. The following are examples that are not acceptable reasons to be off school:

- The birthday of a child or a family member
- Being tired after travelling back from a weekend away or not sleeping well the night before
- Going to a concert or sporting event
- Moving house or having to look after pets
- Helping out at events or parties
- Christmas shopping

Absence may be authorised in the following situations:

- Family wedding
- Family bereavement
- Approved sporting activity
- Educational activity
- Trips, work experience and sporting events run by the school count as the student being present at school

### **County Attendance Team Interventions**

If a student has over 10% (miss 6 out of 60 sessions) or more unauthorised absences for whatever reason, they are classed as a 'Persistent Absentee (PA)' and we may ask the CAT (County Attendance Team) to issue a Penalty Notice Warning. There must be sustained and significant improvement in attendance after the warning has been issued. If attendance does improve, the Penalty Notice will not be issued. However, if it drops again later in the term, the Warning will be re-issued.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a Penalty Notice if:

- they fail to ensure that their child attends school (or other education provision) regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six-week period.
- they allow their child to take holiday in term time without the school's authorisation.
- they fail to return their child to school on an agreed date after an extended holiday.
- their child persistently arrives late for school.

Parents are expected to contact school 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, the school may refer the child to the County Attendance Team at the Local Authority. At the school's request, they may issue a Penalty Notice per parent/carers, per child (currently £60 rising to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid Penalty Notice for prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. This can result in a criminal record and a

fine of up to £2,500, a Community Order, Parenting Order or ultimately a custodial sentence). The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A).

Parents that have previously been issued with Penalty Notices for their children's unauthorised absences, in the event of further unauthorised absences may receive summonses to Court.

"If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence."

## Students

We will use a range of strategies in school with students to promote the importance of attendance and the link with achievement and the 96% target for all. There will be a fortnightly focus in tutor groups showing tutor group attendance with those above or below 95% and there will be inter-form competitions with house points and prizes for tutor groups. Students will plot their own attendance over the year and keep a record in their planner. Assemblies will also regularly promote attendance.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be in school by 8.25am. Arrive in their tutor groups or at assembly by 8.30am, appropriately prepared for the day.</li> <li>• Attend school regularly and for the whole school day until 2.50pm (1.50pm on Wednesdays depending on a student's individual timetable).</li> <li>• Inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that affects their attendance at school.</li> <li>• Sign in and out at Student Reception if required, eg if they leave school for an appointment, or return after an appointment.</li> </ul>
Parents/Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure their child attends school every day unless they are too ill to attend or there is an acceptable reason for absence.</li> <li>• Ensure their child arrives on time, prepared and equipped for the day.</li> <li>• Inform the school of any absence by 9am every day on 01993 702355 selecting the Absence Line option 1, via Insight, or by emailing <a href="mailto:attendance@wgswitney.org.uk">attendance@wgswitney.org.uk</a></li> <li>• Inform school in advance of any absence due to appointments.</li> <li>• Endeavour not to take their child out of school during term time eg book medical and dental appointments for outside school hours whenever possible, and avoid taking family holidays in term-time.</li> <li>• Provide a GP note/appointment card/pharmacist note when necessary.</li> <li>• Notify the school as soon as problems arise with their child's attendance.</li> <li>• Give permission for school to contact their GP surgery to confirm the sighting of a child if they have been absent from school all week.</li> <li>• If requested, bring their child in to school to be sighted by a member of staff if absent for a week or more. This is for safeguarding reasons.</li> <li>• Communicate with school about their child's progress and attend meetings such as Parents' Evenings.</li> <li>• Provide the school with contact phone numbers and email addresses, and inform school if any contact numbers or email addresses change.</li> </ul>
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide students with appropriate education.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide parents with access to the 'Attendance Policy' via the school website.</li> <li>• Respond to concerns raised by both pupils and parents/carers in a prompt, fair and proper manner.</li> <li>• Follow school procedures in dealing with attendance issues.</li> <li>• Share expectations over attendance with parents and students.</li> <li>• Contact the parent if no reason is given for absence during the morning.</li> </ul>
Assistant Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall responsibility for the Attendance Policy.</li> <li>• Produce information regarding the attendance policy for parents.</li> <li>• Inform parents and staff of changes to attendance procedures.</li> <li>• Review attendance monitoring procedures with the Attendance Officer.</li> <li>• Monitor and record students who are late after 8.30am and implement plans for improved punctuality.</li> </ul>
Heads of Year (HOY)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor patterns of absence and implement the attendance policy sanctions.</li> <li>• Arrange Parenting Contract and Interagency meetings as required.</li> <li>• Initiate referrals to the CAT (County Attendance Team).</li> <li>• Liaise with the school nurse when students have a large number of medical absences.</li> <li>• Promote and reward good attendance through inter-form competitions.</li> <li>• Monitor the number of times a student is late.</li> <li>• Support tutors in dealing with students who are persistently late.</li> </ul>
Tutors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete registers during tutor time each morning.</li> <li>• Encourage students to bring in notes before planned absences and after other absences.</li> <li>• Pass absence notes to the Attendance Officer when provided.</li> <li>• Promote and reward good attendance through inter-form competitions.</li> <li>• Support students in tracking their individual attendance fortnightly.</li> <li>• Monitor patterns of absence and implement the attendance policy sanctions.</li> <li>• Send out attendance warning emails when attendance drops below 95% in line with the Attendance policy.</li> <li>• Arrange Parenting Contract and Interagency meetings as required.</li> <li>• Inform the HOY of concerns over attendance patterns or lack of parental contact over absence.</li> <li>• Support sanctions to deal with students who are late.</li> </ul>
Attendance Officer / Pastoral and Attendance Support Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check the Absence Line voicemails, and check the <a href="mailto:attendance@wgswitney.org.uk">attendance@wgswitney.org.uk</a> mailbox that includes absences reported through Insight.</li> <li>• Contact home concerning absence if no contact has been made by parents.</li> <li>• Update students' registers to reflect absences and record details of absences.</li> <li>• Meet with the Assistant Headteacher to discuss attendance.</li> <li>• Produce fortnightly attendance figures for HOYs of all students' attendance.</li> <li>• Produce fortnightly attendance data for each tutor group to support student attendance tracking.</li> <li>• Liaise with HOYs over attendance issues every term.</li> <li>• Manage and monitor students who arrive late to school (with 11-16 Administrator) and monitor for students who are absent from lessons.</li> <li>• Sign in students who are late into school.</li> <li>• Sign students in and out during the school day.</li> <li>• Contact parents if a student is reported as truanting post-registration.</li> <li>• If a student has been absent from school for a full school week due to illness or other reasons and hasn't been sighted by school, the Attendance Officer</li> </ul>

	<p>will raise this with the Safeguarding Lead in school to decide if any action is required. School may need to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ask the parent to bring the child to school to be sighted by a member of staff.</li> <li>- send a member of staff to the student's house to do a welfare check.</li> <li>- inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Safeguarding.</li> <li>- inform LCSS so they can do a Welfare Check if we haven't had any contact from parents for 3 days of absence.</li> </ul>
<b>Heads of Dept.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that class teachers take a register at the start of every lesson.</li> </ul>
<b>Teachers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a register at the start of every lesson.</li> <li>• Resolve truancy from single lessons.</li> </ul>
<b>Governors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor attendance data.</li> <li>• Assess the impact of the attendance policy.</li> </ul>

### Truancy Sweeps

In conjunction with the Police, the school may carry out random blanket sweeps. On any day, the homes of pupils absent without reason provided may be visited, and/or parents/carers contacted to be informed of the pupil's absence. Thames Valley Police and the school may carry out area truancy sweeps where any pupil of school age found on the streets or in a public place is approached, asked why they are not in school and returned to school where appropriate. Parents/carers are contacted if they are not with the pupil at the time. Following both types of sweeps, letters or emails are sent to parents, pupils' attendance is monitored and if unauthorised absence is repeated, consideration is given to issuing Penalty Notices or in very serious cases, court action. Where parents acknowledge problems, they will be offered support by means of engaging in a contract with the school and, if necessary, the CAT (County Attendance Team).

### Students Who Are Late to School in the Morning

Students should be in their tutor rooms in school before 8.30am. Punctuality is an important life skill.

1. If a student arrives after 8:30am without a valid reason, they will be given a warning. If this behaviour persists they will be issued with a C2 consequence.
2. If a student is late because they had an appointment, the parent/carer should have informed the school in advance. If a student does not have a note and we haven't received any contact from home, they will be issued with a C2 consequence.
3. Saying they got up late or had to go the shop is not an excuse. A student has to be at school on time and organise themselves accordingly.
4. If a student was ill in the morning and came in later, they must have a note from a parent, or a parent must have contacted school about this, otherwise they will be given an appropriate consequence to match the length of time missed.
5. If a student is on a bus that is late, there is nothing they can do about that and will not be given a detention. If they miss the bus, that is their fault and they will have a consequence applied.
6. They must go straight to their consequence room in the N block at the end of the school day. Here they will have a restorative conversation with a member of staff, usually their tutor.
7. If a student chooses not to attend the consequences, it will be re-booked. If they do not attend a second time, they will be given an hour's after school detention.

8. If a student chooses not to attend the hour's school detention, they will spend the part of next day in isolation losing their lunch time and will have to stay behind for an hour after the isolation.

### **Post-Registration Truancy**

Post-registration truancy occurs when a student goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the student will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm and it is a safeguarding concern. We take this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If after the school has taken reasonable steps to locate the student they appear to have left the premises without permission, the school will try to contact parents as soon as possible.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The impact of this policy will be monitored at the attendance meetings between the HOYs and the Assistant Headteacher responsible for attendance. There will be a formal annual review of the statistics and the policy at the relevant Governors' Committee.

### **The Law**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age.

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.

Also, under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age, who is registered at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

For educational purposes, the term 'parent' is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day-to-day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school. Further details are available at the following link:

[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/YourChildsWelfareAtSchool/DG\\_4016117](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/YourChildsWelfareAtSchool/DG_4016117)