Attendance Policy

Approved by:	Charlotte Finning	Date: June 2023
Last reviewed on:	June 2023	
Next review due by:	June 2026	

Contents

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

The Designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance is Charlotte Finning and can be contacted via 020 8648 1365 or cfinning@wandlevalleyacademy.org.uk

3.4 The Attendance Officer

The School Attendance Officer is responsible for:

> Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
> Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
> Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher
> Working with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence
> Advising the Headteacher (authorised by the Headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Charlotte Finning and can be contacted via 0208 648 1365 or cfinning@wandlevalleyacademy.org.uk

3.5 Class Tutors

Class Tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office, who then follow on absent pupils and record absence as appropriate.

3.6 School Admin Staff

School office staff will:

> Take calls from parents / carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
> Transfer calls from parents / carers to the Attendance Lead and or Class Tutor in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
> Parents / Carers must report the absence or lateness of the pupil, calls from a pupil will not be authorised without the parents' / carers' communication

3.7 Parents / Carers

Parents / Carers are expected to:

> Make sure their child attends every day / timetabled session on time
> Call or message the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence, and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
> Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
> Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

Attend school every day on time and attend every timetabled session on time

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

> Present
> Attending an approved off-site educational activity
> Absent
> Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

> The original entry

- > The amended entry
- > The reason for the amendment
- > The date on which the amendment was made
- > The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- > Whether the absence is authorised or not
- > The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- > The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 09:00 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 09:15 and will be kept open until 09:30 for morning registration. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:20 and will be kept open until 13:30 for afternoon registration.

4.2   Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent / carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 09:00 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin / office staff (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent / carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents / carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3   Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent / carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents / carers can request leave of absence to attend a medical or dental appointment by contacting and notifying the school office.

However, we encourage parents / carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent / carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4   Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- > Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code – L
- > After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code – U
- > Lateness will be followed up initially by the school office and, if it continues, the Attendance Lead and Education Welfare Officer

4.5   Following Up Unexplained Absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- > Call the pupil's parent / carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact allocated agencies already supporting the family, refer to Children's Services and / or contact Police.
- > Identify whether the absence is approved or not

> ⟩ Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
> ⟩ Call the parent / carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer

4.6 Reporting to Parents / Carers

The school will regularly inform parents / carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly reports, and attendance letters where attendance is becoming a concern.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Tutor room display boards

> ⟩ Weekly attendance certificates, presented in assembly for excellent and most improved
> ⟩ Positive messages home
> ⟩ Tutor room display boards

6. Attendance Monitoring

We monitor and analyse attendance and absence to identify needs of pupils, and / or cohorts, that require support with their attendance. We also have a tailored approach to supporting attendance, take into account information concerning pupils' mental health, and any contextual issues that could be impacting on attendance.

> ⟩ Pupil attendance tracker
> ⟩ SIMS
> ⟩ SLEUTH

6.1 Monitoring Attendance

The school will:

> ⟩ Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
> ⟩ Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

6.2 Analysing Attendance

The school will:

> ⟩ Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
> ⟩ Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

6.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school will:

> ⟩ Provide regular attendance reports to Class Tutors and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
> ⟩ Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

> Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
> Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and / or Local Authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
> Closer monitoring
> Communication home
> Supportive school attendance meetings
> Liaison with EHCP Coordinator
> Referral to Education Welfare Officer
> Referral for Early Help Assessment
> Referral to Children's Services

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum 12-month frequency, by Charlotte Finning. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

> Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
> Behaviour Policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
U	Very late arrival	Pupils arrives late after the register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer / educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit / trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
	Authorised absence	
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Suspended	Pupil has been suspended but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised Absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local / national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term / bank holiday /INSET day