

# Wellfield High School

Yewlands Drive, Leyland, Lancashire, PR25 2TP  
Telephone: 01772 421303 Term time e-mail: enquiries@whs.lancs.sch.uk  
www.whs.lancs.sch.uk  
Mrs L A Gwinnett, Executive Head



## Attendance Policy

---

## The Importance of Maintaining Excellent Attendance

Wellfield High School is a successful school and promotes strong partnerships with parents/carers in encouraging 100% attendance and punctuality for all students. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence.

Missing out on education has a significant effect on students' life opportunities. Everyone associated with the school – students, parents, carers, all teaching, support staff and external agencies must do all in their power to ensure that excellent attendance and punctuality remain an integral part of the school's work.

Achieving high attendance is a necessity in preparing a child for future working life as an adult.

Children should be at the school, **on time, every day** that the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind.

All research shows that students who attend well, are more likely to achieve. Each hour in school is a valuable learning experience that cannot be recovered.

Descriptor	Attendance	Equals absent number of days	Learning hours lost
<b>Excellent</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>99%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Good</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>20</b>
	<b>97%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>30</b>
	<b>96%</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>37.5</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>47.5</b>
<b>Cause for Concern</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>95</b>
	<b>89%</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>105</b>
	<b>88%</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>115</b>
	<b>87%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>Serious cause for concern</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>142</b>
	<b>84%</b>	<b>30.5</b>	<b>152</b>
	<b>83%</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>160</b>
	<b>82%</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>170</b>
	<b>81%</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>180</b>

At Wellfield High School we are committed to providing the highest quality education possible for all our students by building a healthy learning community in which students can develop to their full potential.

This Policy sets out how the school works with all stakeholders to achieve high levels of attendance.

## **Roles and Responsibilities for Attendance Matters in This School**

### **Parents and Carers**

- Are responsible in law for ensuring the excellent and punctual attendance of their child and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.
- Are responsible for ensuring their child has a healthy routine which allows them to have sufficient rest to engage in maximum learning.
- Will contact school if the student is absent from school, ensuring contact is maintained for continuous absences.
- Ensure their child is prepared for learning by arriving to school on time, in full school uniform and with required equipment i.e. stationary, chromebook, PE kit
- Support regular attendance by requesting medical appointments are made after school hours. If this is not possible an appointment card must be provided.
- Contact the Attendance Officer to discuss any issues or concerns that may affect attendance at school.
- Attend meetings with the Student Services team to discuss any attendance concerns.
- Support their child's attendance by not taking holidays during term time. Holidays taken during term time will not be authorised, and such absences will be referred to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued which will result in both parents being fined.
- If leave from school during term time is unavoidable due to exceptional circumstances parents/carers must write an appeal letter at least 6 weeks prior to the expected leave.
- Familiarise themselves with the attendance policy and should work closely with school staff to overcome any problems which may affect their child's attendance.
- If required, participate in Parenting Contracts, Common Assessment Framework and accept early intervention strategies offered. Also cooperate with support and interventions offered by school or other agencies.

### **Pupils**

- Pupils are better prepared for learning when regular routines are in place, i.e. bedtimes and limited use of game consoles.
- Attend school before 8.45am, ready to be engaged in learning at 8.50am.
- Be aware that full attendance at school provides them with optimum learning opportunities which will increase their career opportunities in the future.
- Speak to parents/teachers for support if issues arise preventing them from attending regularly and on time.
- Be aware of school Behaviour Policy relating to detentions and further sanctions for persistent lateness.
- Cooperate and participate in interventions and support offered by school or other agencies.

### **Executive Headteacher/Head of school**

- Raise the profile and reward good attendance and punctuality across the school.
- Ensure compliance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended.
- Set aspirational targets for improving the school's attendance figures.
- Ensure the Policy is implemented by the Wellfield community.
- Consider each request for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances against the school's criteria, decide whether some or all of the leave will be authorised.

### **Governors**

- Ensure compliance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended.
- Adopt the whole-school policy and review regularly.
- Monitor the consistent implementation of the Attendance Policy.
- Set aspirational targets for improving the school's attendance figures.

### **Director of Student Services**

- Strategic leadership of attendance. Formulating Attendance Policy and carry out the action plan.
- Take the lead in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school.
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance.
- Prepare written reports analysing attendance and punctuality. Promote good attendance and punctuality to staff and students in line with the school policy.
- Liaise with DFES and Secondary Strategy consultants.
- Monitor tracking to compare academic success with attendance.
- Consider each request for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances against the school's criteria, and decide whether some or all of the leave will be authorised.

### **Tutors**

- Ensure registers are accurately marked during tutor period, all paper registers must be returned to the PDC.
- Amend the register on SIMS (or inform the Attendance Officer) if a student arrives late to tutor.
- Discuss the importance of maintaining excellent attendance and punctuality with all students.
- Track attendance and punctuality of students. Record achievement points for students with 100% weekly attendance and punctuality.
- Discuss instances of inappropriate absence with the student and alert the Attendance Officer for intervention and support.
- Alert Head of House or Attendance Officer of any persistent attendance or punctuality concerns or support requested.

## Attendance Policy

### Teaching Staff

- Complete registers accurately using SIMS (or return paper register to the PDC) during the first 10 minutes of the lesson in conjunction with the school safeguarding policy.
- Follow up suspected truancy by reporting to Student Support in PDC.
- When possible, provide appropriate work for students that are unable to access school.
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and a safe learning environment.
- To be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance.
- To see students attendance as the responsibility of all school staff and include when issuing subject rewards and prizes.
- Participate in training regarding school systems and procedures if and when required.

### House Progress Leaders

- Oversee, report and monitor attendance and punctuality for their House groups (Including the monitoring of relevant sub-groups), on a regular basis, setting targets for improvements as appropriate.
- Liaise with tutors and highlight problems that require action. Monitor the performance of individual tutor groups.
- Ensure attendance is a regular agenda item at Pastoral meetings including agreeing the rewards process.
- Act on daily information from staff concerning student absences or habitual lateness.
- Liaise with the PDC team to inform parents of any students whose attendance and/or punctuality are a cause for concern by following the school's attendance and monitoring procedure.
- Intervene early to arrange and attend meetings with parents and relevant staff where there are attendance issues (e.g. subject truancy).
- Promote good attendance through assemblies.

### Attendance Officer

- Work under the leadership of the Director of Student Services and provide attendance reports when requested.
- Implement school Attendance Policy in conjunction with the Director of Student Services.
- Monitor the administration of SIMS registrations, input registers provided by teaching staff.
- Follow the absence procedure by:
  - Running SIMS students absent list.
  - Contacting parent/carers to establish a reason for absence.
  - Informing the Director of Student Services if a home visit is required.
  - Posting a letter to parents/carers requesting they provide a reason for absence.
- Ensure all unexplained absence codes are amended to authorised or unauthorised with two weeks of absence.

## Attendance Policy

- Promote attendance throughout the school offering support to Head of Years.
- Monitor and support priority school cohort implementing systems to detect methods for early intervention. Provide support to parents and students to raise attendance.
- Work with the Head of Years and report students needing support and early intervention or rewards.
- Work with parents/carers of targeted students to provide support in the return to school.
- Collate and return PA and attendance data half termly to Lancashire County Council and Senior Leadership team.
- Refer to Director of Student Services Parents/Carers that are not complying with the legal requirement of ensuring all students receive a full-time education. To be considered for legal intervention.

### Understanding Types of Absence

Every half day (=1 session) absence from school has to be classified by the school either as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

#### Authorised

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a legitimate reason such as:

- **Medical / dental appointments** which unavoidably fall in school time - *parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day.* Where this is not possible, students should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.
- **Illness** In the case of a 'one-off' absence, a note from the parent informing the school that their son/daughter is ill will usually be acceptable. The school reserves the right to question the validity of this if they have good reason to do so. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc. For absences exceeding three days, medical confirmation may be requested.
- **Exceptional circumstances.** Reasons given by parents/carers will be considered carefully. However the pupil's absence may not be authorised. For absences exceeding three days, medical confirmation may be requested to prevent the absences being coded as unauthorised.

#### Unauthorised

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 Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

## Attendance Policy

The type of absences which may not be authorised include:

- Parents/carers allowing their child to be absent from school unnecessarily e.g. minor illness, tiredness.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Unexplained absences – no reason provided.
- Shopping, looking after other siblings or birthdays.
- Leave of absence during term time for day trips or holidays.
- Students who arrive at school after the register has closed.
- Absences which coincide with important curriculum events (e.g. PSHCE days) for which a satisfactory explanation has not been provided.

Any outstanding or unexplained absence will remain unauthorised if the school has not received an acceptable explanation within two weeks of the absence.

The following codes will be used for unauthorised absence:

- N** No reason yet provided for absence. This will become unauthorised if a reason is not provided. (This code must be altered within two weeks to authorise or unauthorised)
- O** Unauthorised absence
- U** Late (**after** the register closes)

Parents should be aware that the decision whether to authorise an absence or not rests with the school. Hence, if there is any ambiguity relating to an absence, school may request further evidence from parents before an absence may be authorised. This may be in the form of a prescription, an appointment card or similar.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school, causing a pattern of non-attendance. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend school it is better for a parent to contact the school to enable both to work together to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling on an on-going basis **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any student's educational prospects and we need parents/carers full support and co-operation to tackle this and support improvement.

According to DfE (Department for Education) guidance (March 2013); 'If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them the parents

## Attendance Policy

may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority'. In addition 'Local authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996)' This will initially result in a **Penalty Notice Fine**. This will be issued to both parents even if one of the parents does not live with the student. Each parent will be issued with a £60 fine and will have 21 days to make payment. This will rise to £120 if the initial fine is paid between 22 and 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice Fine will result in further legal action being taken by the courts, with the maximum fine currently £2,500 or three months in prison. **There is no right of appeal by parents against the penalty notice.**

We monitor all absence thoroughly, therefore any student whose attendance indicates they are likely to reach the PA threshold will be given priority consideration, and parents will be informed of this immediately, invited to attend a meeting in school to discuss the reasons for the absences and agree an action plan. This could also include individual incentive programmes, parenting contracts and/or a referral for legal intervention. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Local Authority.

### **When a student does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:**

- If no contact is received to report a reason for the student's absence, the Attendance Officer will attempt to make contact via telephone or e-mail.
- In the event of no response being received for the absence, a letter of concern will be sent home. If no response is received within 5 days of the date of the letter, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- We may conduct a home visit, if it has not been possible to contact the parent/carer.
- If attendance is a cause for concern, we may invite you in to discuss the situation.

*There are times when we need to contact parents, to keep them informed of school business or if a child is injured or ill. Therefore we need to have up to date contact numbers at all times. Parents/carers are responsible for providing updated contact numbers as and when necessary.*

### **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child 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 pupils also disrupt lessons and other students learning, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn, encourage



## Attendance Policy

absence (being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school).

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at **8.40am** and we expect students to be moving to their lesson at this time. Registers are marked at **8.45am** if a student is not present in the lesson at this time they will receive a late mark. At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a student 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. If a pattern emerges parents / carers will be invited to meet with the Attendance team, alternatively parents/carers can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.

If the student continues to arrive to school late the matter could be referred to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued.

### **Safeguarding**

The school reserves the right to invite parents into school to discuss any attendance issues that raise potential safeguarding concerns. In addition if the school suspects that a student may be at potential risk as a result of their absence from school the safeguarding team reserve the right to refer these concerns to the appropriate external agencies, i.e. – social care, police. The school will inform parents / carers if a referral is to be made. However, this may not be appropriate in every circumstance depending on the nature of the safeguarding concern and a referral may be made without informing the parent / carer.

### **Children Missing From Education**

The school recognises that when a child goes missing from school, it could result in a 'child at risk' therefore, under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 we have a legal duty of care to make arrangements to identify, as far as it is possible to do so, the whereabouts of children missing from education. We will make 'reasonable' enquiries into the location of the student with continuous unauthorised absence or for those who fail to return from leave of absence granted during term time.

The school reserves the right to contact relevant agencies to seek advice (Children's Social Care, police, siblings school, parent place of employment and other family members) if any child is absent from school for more than five days without confirmation from parents. Every attempt will be made to communicate with

## Attendance Policy

parents to ensure the child is safe. A referral will be made to the 'Children Missing Education Team' if our attempts are unsuccessful.

### Leave In Term Time

In line with national changes in 2013 which removed the authority from a Headteacher to authorise leave during term time for the purpose of a holiday, we will not authorise any term time leave of absences for holidays. All requests will be considered on an individual basis without bias on receipt of a leave of absence request form. If the request is to be considered as an exceptional circumstance, this request must be made in writing with documentation evidence at least six weeks prior to the request. Parents/carers may be asked to attend a panel meeting to discuss the circumstances.

The Government has not defined the 'exceptional circumstances'. It is for each Headteacher to decide what they view as an exceptional circumstance. The DfE's advice says schools should consider each request individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. DfE guidance says the fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

It is important that you understand that leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us at any time unless circumstances surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents, to be exceptional. We strongly urge parents to avoid booking holidays during term time. If unauthorised leave is taken a request will be made for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

A request will be made to the Local Authority for the issue of a Penalty Notice to parent/carer who fail to ensure their child attends school. Fixed Penalty Notices are £60 if paid within 21 days otherwise rising to £120 if paid after the 21 days but within 28 days. Parents can be prosecuted if payment is not received within 28 days.

### Fixed Penalty Notice

We believe that any absence from school, for whatever reason, is detrimental to a child's long term life opportunities and should be avoided. Reducing absence from school is a key priority, both nationally and locally. Missing school limits a child's access to learning and, long term, will adversely affect their attainment levels. A 'knock-on' effect of this disruption to school routines is that a pupil may be left vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

**Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if their son/daughter fails to attend school regularly, and the absences are classed as unauthorised. Such cases may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act, 1996.**

## Attendance Policy

*The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school. In line with the national target we expect all our students to achieve a minimum of 98% attendance. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils, as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. The use of legal intervention is used across the county to ensure parents adhere to their legal responsibilities to provide their child with a full time education. It is our intention to work closely with our pupils and their families to prevent legal action being requested.*

*We operate a very successful and supportive pastoral service with an open door policy, which means that if a parent/carer requires support with attendance/punctuality or would like to discuss the consequences of leave of absences during term time a member of our team would be available.*

<b>Document Approval</b>	
Signed:	Mr S Barnard
<b>On behalf of the Governing Body</b>	
Approval Date:	May 2019
Review Due:	May 2020