



## **WESTCLIFF PRIMARY ACADEMY ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **Philosophy**

Westcliff Primary Academy is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance is crucial. As an academy, we will do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as soon as possible.

It is the policy of our academy to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school life. Westcliff Primary Academy will actively promote and encourage 100 percent attendance for all our pupils.

Westcliff Primary Academy will give a high priority to conveying to pupils and parents the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish home - school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems that affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with families and pupils to resolve these problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clear, focussed approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

### **PRINCIPLES**

The academy will:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures, registration regulations and education law.
- Complete electronic registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.
- Stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence.
- Display attendance rates on the newsletter and reward good and improved attendance of all pupils.
- Set the target for whole school attendance at 96%.
- Ensure that the class teachers monitor the attendance of pupils.
- Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence.
- Consult with all members of the academy community and the Pupil Welfare Officer (PWO) service in developing and maintaining the whole academy attendance policy.
- Ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures by Senior Leaders and the governing body.
- Include attendance and related issues in the newsletters sent to parents and pupils.
- Report on attendance data to the governing body 3 times per year.
- Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed.
- Have in place procedures that will allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of others.

## PROCEDURES

- If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil on the first morning of absence, we will contact the parent by telephone, text message or a home visit
- Half termly attendance meetings will take place between the academy and PWO to discuss deteriorating attendances or attendances of concern.
- With prolonged absence a safeguarding visit may be necessary and will be undertaken by the PWO and/or Police. The aim is to identify and resolve any difficulties that are preventing the pupil from attending the academy and to safeguard the pupil. The parents/carers will be made aware of their legal responsibility regarding attendance.
- The academy will send an attendance letter for pupils whose attendance falls below 95 per cent or they have a pattern of broken weeks. Attendance targets will be set which will be monitored by the Headteacher and PWO. The parents/carers will be asked for their support in fulfilling the legal requirements regarding academy attendance.

If attendance is unexpectedly below 90%, future absences will be unauthorised without medical evidence.

A period of 24 hours absence is required for any pupil with vomiting or diarrhoea. Such absence due to illness is authorised.

- Westcliff Primary Academy will reward good and improved attendance through:
  - Attendance reward - weekly trophy and a biscuit for 100% attendance
  - Attendance certificates at the end of the academic year

Annual reports to parents include a record of their child's attendance and punctuality.

### Attendance Interventions

Westcliff Primary Academy, in conjunction with the PWO service, will identify pupils whose attendance is lower than 95 per cent or missing 10 or more sessions. Appropriate interventions will be considered such as Fast Track to Positive Outcomes, Penalty Notice Initiative or PWO casework. Where improvement in attendance is not secured, court proceedings can be used to prosecute parents and if proven a range of sentences including fines of up to £2500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment. Other disposals such as Parenting Orders or Community sentences can be imposed depending upon the circumstances. Costs may also be imposed. A range of supportive early interventions led by the PWO will seek to improve attendance and avoid the need for prosecution.

### Unauthorised leave during term time

In addition to this and in support of the philosophy of this policy, leave during term time will not be routinely authorised. In accordance with Government guidelines, Headteachers cannot authorise any leave in term time unless in exceptional circumstances. All requests for leave in term time must be submitted to the academy in writing (see appendix 1). The academy can request the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices to parents/carers following leave in term time.

## Penalty Notices

The Department for Education has announced national changes to penalty notices issued for unauthorised absence in term time. These changes came into effect on 19 August 2024.

The changes to be aware of are:

- Penalty notices issued for offences that take place after 19 August 2024 will be charged at a new rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.
- The threshold at which a penalty notice **must** be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period. This may include absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution).
- Only penalty notices issued for absences taking place after 19 August 2024 will count towards the above thresholds.
- A school week is any week in which a school meets at least once.

## Non-routine admissions

The academy welcomes non-routine admissions and will support the pupil's integration by:

- Initiating an integration plan and/or referral to support staff as necessary
- Monitor attendance to ensure the pupil has settled into academy life
- Maintain regular liaison with the pupil's parents/carers
- Refer to the Headteacher and/or PWO if problems with integration or attendance issues persist

## Punctuality

As both attendance and punctuality are linked to pupil progress, pupils are expected to arrive at the academy on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class, if they are late.

Start and finishing times of registration: our doors open at 8.45am. A child arriving after then will be marked as 'Late'. A child arriving after 9.15am will be marked as unauthorised late when the registers close at 9.15am.

Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised and occasions of lateness should be rare. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other pupils with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved immediately, it can be referred to the Pupil Welfare Service.

We are committed to ensuring that pupils set excellent standards of punctuality and attendance and therefore parents will be informed where pupils have accumulated a significant amount of missed learning time in any one term.

## **Performance**

Westcliff aims for the highest standards for attendance and punctuality to enable our pupils to reach their full potential. When evaluating success, the academy will consider whether or not:

- Attendance has improved and whether attendance levels are in line or better than the national average.
- Punctuality has improved.
- Pupils are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and the attendance procedures operating within the academy.
- Attendance issues have been included as topics in academy assemblies, PSHE lessons or as a theme for any other lessons.

## **Practice**

The Academy will recognise the importance of good practice by:

- Keeping and maintaining registers accurately.
- Maintaining a consistent approach to marking registers.
- Regularly analysing attendance data.
- Ensuring prompt follow-up action in cases of non-school attendance.
- Liaising closely with the Academy's PWO.

In order to ensure the success of this policy every member of the academy staff will make attendance and punctuality a priority and convey to the pupils the importance of their education.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

It is important to set realistic targets; these targets may be set in consultation with the Local Authority or with the Governing Body. The school will look at those interventions which have been successful as part of the evaluation process.

## **School Target**

Our school target for attendance is set at 96%

## **Persistent Absence Definition**

Attendance below 90% is defined by the DFE as persistent absence.

## **Definition Of "Parent"**

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines "parent" to include:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not; and
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

It is essential that everyone involved in promoting attendance is clear about the important role that must be carried out in order to raise standards. Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of the whole School.

**Any unauthorised absence is damaging to a child's education as well as reflecting badly on the school. It also gives children the wrong messages about the importance of education which may lead to problems later in schooling. Good attendance and punctuality are important values for later in life.**

**Policy reviewed: September 2024**

**By: Amanda Stokes**

**Review date: September 2025**

Appendix 1.

**Parental Request form for leave due to exceptional circumstances.**

Please note that completing this application does not guarantee that it will be granted

Date of request:

Name of Children:	First Name	Surname	Year Group/Class
If this request is for a holiday please list who is going			
1 <sup>st</sup> date of school absence:		Last day of absence:	
Length of absence applied for (number of school days only):			
Siblings in other schools: Please note this request information will be shared with the attendance lead in the school in which the sibling/s attend	First Name	Surname	School
<b>Contact Details</b>			
Parents: (eg. Mother, Father, Grandparent, Carer):	First name:	First name:	
	Surname:	Surname:	
	DOB:	DOB:	
	Address:	Address:	
	Postcode:	Postcode:	
	Email:	Email:	
	Home phone number:	Home phone number:	
	Mobile:	Mobile:	
	Alternative number while away:	Alternative number while away:	

