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# West Hill School

## **Attendance Policy**

**Date: 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**Approved by: Full Board of Trustees**

**Next review due by: Autumn Term 2022**

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## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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 Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees are responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds 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 the Trustees
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 3.3 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher

- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **3.4 Class teachers/form tutors**

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

### **3.5 School office staff**

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## **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 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 8:45am on each school day for the start of registration.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am and will be kept open until 9:05am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:55pm.

### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

These are the following ways you can report your child as absent:

- Ring school on 0161 338 2193 (select option 1) and leave a voicemail for the Attendance Officer
- Email school on [absence@westhillschool.co.uk](mailto:absence@westhillschool.co.uk)
- Ring school on 0161 338 2193 and inform the office staff

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.

Please be aware if you have received an attendance letter – evidence will need to be seen to confirm the authorised absence for the appointment.

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 at 8:46 will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Parents/carers will receive a message via our Schoolcomms app to make them aware if their child is late to school each morning.

Students who are late to school on a regular basis will be monitored and placed on a late report by their Head of Year. If the lateness continues whilst on the report, parents may be asked in school for a meeting.

### **4.5 Following up absence**

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by;
  - A Schoolcomms message will be sent out via text and email each morning after registration has closed.
  - If school get no reply then the Attendance Officer will make contact via the phone to enquire further.
  - If school have still not managed to get a reason for the absence after the above, then an unexplained absence letter will be sent out in the post.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

### **4.6 Reporting to parents**

Parents will receive notification of their child's attendance percentage in termly progress assessment reports.

However parents can request for a copy of the attendance certificate by contacting the school's Attendance Officer.

## **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

## 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Parents who want to request a term-time absence must make a written request to the Attendance Officer as far in advance of the leave as possible stating:

- Student's Name and Form group
- The first day of absence and the return to school date
- The reason behind the request, giving as much detail as possible
- Providing supporting evidence where available

## 5.2 Reducing persistent absence

When a pupil's attendance falls below our minimum expected attendance target of 96%, they are at risk of becoming a persistent absentee.

When this occurs a series of events will take place, to help encourage the increase of attendance:

- The parent/carer will receive an attendance letter – making them aware that school will no longer be authorising absences (unless medical evidence is provided).
- If attendance doesn't improve after this, the parent/carer might receive a home visit by the Attendance Officer.
- Following this if improvement is still not yet noticeable then parents/carers will be invited into school for an attendance meeting with the schools Attendance Officer and relevant staff.
- Eventually, after all steps have taken place and attendance is still low or decreasing then school will submit an Educational Penalty Warning/Notice to the Local Authority.

## 5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

➤ Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason  
 If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 6. Attendance monitoring

The Attendance Officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

Parents/carers are expected to contact the school on a daily basis if their child is going to be absent from school.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

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 Board of Trustees.

## 7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Board of Trustees.

## 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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school

<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>J</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		



<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day