



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### AIMS AND PRIORITIES

1. To promote full attendance for all students.
2. To actively encourage attendance by promoting a positive school environment, where students can achieve and feel a sense of well-being.
3. To provide a safe, secure learning environment for students.
4. To reward excellent attendance and improved attendance.
5. To adhere to the statutory requirements in relation to the national criteria for attendance and the formal procedures concerning student registration.
6. To make parents aware of their legal responsibilities in relation to school attendance and punctuality.
7. To make parents and students aware of the importance of full school attendance to achieve academic success.

## ATTENDANCE AGREEMENT

### Students will:

- Attend school every day.
- Arrive in school and to class on time - (persistent latecomers will be placed on the late detention list).
- Remain in class unless given permission to leave.
- Remain in school unless given permission to leave. Students leaving will collect an exit slip from the pupil office and will keep this on their person.
- Catch up missing work following absence.

### Parents will:

- Make sure their child attends school every day, unless too ill to attend.
- Make medical and other appointments outside of school hours except in emergencies. Where medical assistance is necessary in school hours parents should have the school medical attendance form stamped and signed by the doctor's surgery.
- Organise family holidays during school holiday periods.
- Support their child and school in aiming for full attendance at school.
- Contact the student office on the first day and each subsequent day if their child is absent from school to explain the absence.
- For extended periods of absences or recurrent absences further written confirmation may be requested.

- **Absence Alert Text Number 07624804567:** This is the virtual mobile number from which absence alert SMS text messages are sent to parents/carers. Parents/carers who reply to absence alerts by text will send their texts to this number.

**Messaging Text Number 07624804557:** This is the virtual mobile number for which Group SMS text messages are sent to parents/carers. The school uses this service if we need to send a message to large numbers of parents and you can reply to this number if you wish. You can also contact school by phone on 01942 202580, or e-mail on [studentoffice@westleigh.wigan.sch.uk](mailto:studentoffice@westleigh.wigan.sch.uk).

### Rewards and Incentives

Students are rewarded for excellent attendance in a number of ways. Attendance is celebrated weekly on the main corridor, displaying which forms have the best attendance. Each week the form with the most improved attendance receives an early entry pass into the school canteens. Half termly students with attendance greater than 98% receive a certificate. Students who have 100% receive also a badge

### Safeguarding

Should the child be the subject of a Child Protection Plan, or should the school have child protection concerns, including FGM, then Designated Safeguarding lead will immediately notify Social Care of our concerns.

### Form Tutors will:

- Mark all registers accurately and promptly.
- Using the school guidelines, absences must be registered using the appropriate code.
- Monitor students' attendance and discuss reasons for absence with students.
- Take an interest in students' welfare and alert the Head of Year if a student's attendance begins to cause concern.
- Counsel students whose attendance begins to deteriorate or falls below 98%.
- Refer students whose attendance is irregular, or falls below 95%, to the Head of Year.
- Promote good attendance during registration period through discussion and form activities.
- Assist students to monitor their own attendance and set targets each half term.
- Encourage improved attendance of all students in their form group.
- Establish reasons for a student's absence and authorise absence accordingly.
- Alert the Head of Year to occasions of unauthorised absence and any concerns re: attendance/registers.
- Reintegrate students who have had extended absence in a positive and welcoming way.

### The Head of Year will:

- Have oversight of the attendance of all students and forms in their year group, liaising constantly with other relevant professionals in and out of school.
- Consult with Form Tutors to raise levels of attendance.
- Liaise with the Attendance Worker and appropriate professionals in school fortnightly regarding attendance of students in their year group.
- Conduct joint interviews with the Attendance Worker for students whose attendance falls below 95%.
- Co-ordinate support strategies for students returning to school after periods of absence.

- Ensure that parents are informed if their child truants from school and any consequences they may receive.
- Liaise with the Safeguarding Officer and Attendance Worker and Learning Mentor re: identified students in their year group and students who are admitted mid-year.
- Request the Attendance Worker to send a standard letter re: attendance for students whose attendance reaches 10 sessions absent.
- Do joint home visits with the Safeguarding Officer, students causing concern.
- Support Parents in getting students into school

#### All Teaching Staff will:

- Promote good attendance by providing meaningful and challenging learning experiences.
- Complete class registers promptly.
- Keep accurate records of attendance for their teaching groups.
- Be vigilant about non-attendance to lessons.
- Follow up non-attendance with students and alert the Head of Year and Head of Faculty regarding suspicious absences.
- Ensure students are able to make sense of learning activities and complete work following a periods of absence.
- Supervise students at lesson changeovers to encourage prompt arrival at lessons.

#### The Attendance Manager will:

- The Attendance Manager will:  
Authorise absence in registers when telephone calls from parents are received.  
If there is doubt as to the validity of the absence the Attendance Manager will check with the Head of Year and Family and Education Welfare Officer.
- Text or telephone home on the first day of absence for students if a message has not been received. Follow-up calls will be made on subsequent days for students whose attendance is causing concern, or are known truants.
- Students deemed 'at risk, will be prioritised in chasing up absence. If no contact is made HOY, FEWO and Safeguarding Lead will be informed.
- Produce all statistics/information/register totals/certificates re: attendance as required for Heads of Year and the deputy Headteacher.
- Mark in the register students who are late and miss registration.
- Produce a printout of attendance for each form weekly for each Head of Year, Form Tutor and the SLT i/c of attendance.
- Inform parents if their child truants from school.
- Support Parents in getting students into school
- Co-ordinate support strategies to improve attendance within the year group.
- Monitor absences of students on daily basis.
- Attend weekly attendance meeting with Senior Leadership Team.
- Identify students with 10+ sessions absent and send the relevant letter to parents. Contact parents to discuss a student's attendance, inviting parents into school.
- Hold attendance meetings with students, parents and any appropriate outside agency representatives.
- Co-ordinate support strategies to improve attendance within the year group.
- Liaise with Safeguarding Officer to complete Action Plans for 25+ sessions absent.
- Carry out selected home visits

- Liaise with SLT /HOY/Appropriate Learning Mentor weekly regarding attendance of students in their year groups.
- Take part in Attendance panels in severe cases when other interventions have been unsuccessful in improving attendance.
- Follow LA and National Guidelines on improving attendance.
- Along with Attendance Enforcement Team, be involved in the instigation of parenting contracts for parents and students with poor school attendance.
- Provide full attendance analysis to Senior Leadership Team at the end of every academic year.
- Provide feedback to Governors' Student Welfare Committee as appropriate.

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Be available to support Heads of Year, Safeguarding Officer and the Lead Behaviour and Attendance Worker at attendance interviews.
- Lead an attendance panel in severe cases when other intervention has been unsuccessful in improving attendance.
- Liaise with Startwell 0-19 Service to provide the best possible service for the school.
- Plan and support strategies to improve attendance.
- Co-ordinate the admission process for students.
- Present the attendance strategy and data to Governors.

The Governors will :

- Monitor attendance termly and review all strategies in place.

As attendance is so important, the school and governors took the decision, some time ago, not to authorise holidays taken in school time. A two week holiday taken during school time results in a loss of learning time of more than 5%. This makes it impossible for a child to record a good attendance record even if they lose no time at all through illness.

Parents who choose to remove their children from school for a holiday of 5 days or more may be served with a Fixed Penalty Notice by the Education Welfare Service – please see below

## Additional Attendance Information

### What is acceptable attendance?

The School expects all students to aim for 100% attendance. Any attendance level below 98% would initiate intervention by the school. This could be as simple as a 'chat' with the form teacher or may, in more severe circumstances, lead to the involvement of agencies outside of the school.

### What does the school do to promote excellent attendance?

- Attendance Improvement Officer works with students to improve their attendance/punctuality.
- Learning Mentors are used by the school to help students raise their attainment and achieve their potential.
- Counselling is available for students and, in some cases, their parents or carers, within the school itself. This is a confidential service and is delivered by an independent group of counsellors.
- Nurture Groups are available in school to help integrate nervous students or students with specific issues. Not all students are confident enough to spend every lesson in a classroom without problem. The school aims to ease such students into appropriate learning environments with the minimum of fuss and disruption to their learning.

### How does the school record absence?

- The school uses an electronic system of attendance registration that is updated within each lesson by the form teacher or subject teacher.
- The system records whether the child is present or absent.
- Absence is categorised as being authorised (agreed and accepted by the school as being appropriate) or unauthorised.
- Examples of authorised absence would be genuine illness, medical appointments etc.
- Examples of unauthorised absence would be truancy, prolonged periods of absence without a medical certificate and unauthorised holidays in term time.
- The codes used are mandatory codes as issued by the government.

### What should I do if my child is ill?

- Firstly, decide if your child is too ill to attend school. Each day the school is attended by a number of students who feel under the weather or 'a bit sick'. The majority of these students improve during the day and have no problems as a result of their attending.
- If your child is too ill to attend, please ring the school (01942 202580 – press 1 when requested in order to report a student absent) on the first day, and on each subsequent day your child is unwell. You could also use the text service on 0762480 4567 or call the absence hotline on 0844 239 3341. You can also email directly to the pupil office - [pupiloffice@westleigh.wigan.sch.uk](mailto:pupiloffice@westleigh.wigan.sch.uk).
- Please note that medical evidence / GP note will be requested by the school for extended or recurrent periods of absence. Please download this medical certificate (see below), if required, ensuring it is stamped by the medical surgery.
- Medical Card Appointment Slip

### Can a student take a holiday in term time?

- The school and head teacher's stance is that, normally, holidays taken in term time will result in unauthorised absence marks being entered in the register. This reflects the government and local authority view that holidays should not be taken in school term time.
- If you feel there are exceptional circumstances behind your request for a holiday, please contact the school to discuss your reasons and to make your application.
- The decision to grant holiday requests lies solely with the head teacher.

### If my child is absent from school, what can I expect will happen?

- On the first day of your child's absence you will receive a text from the school (if you have not already contacted the school) asking you to explain your child's absence.
- On the third day of the absence you will need to provide medical evidence in the form of a Doctor's note, appointment letter or card.
- If your child's absence is more frequent, you should expect to receive a letter informing you of your child's attendance level or a home visit.
- If your child's absence is unacceptable or at a significant level (regardless of the reason for the absence) you should expect to be asked to attend a meeting in school to discuss support appropriate to your child.

### If my child has an unacceptable level of unauthorised absence, what can I expect may happen?

- You will be contacted by the school, either by telephone, letter and/or visit to your home in order that the level of, and reasons for, your child's absence can be discussed with you.
- A plan of action will be compiled that is aimed at helping you improve your child's school attendance.
- A failure to comply with any such plan without valid reason will, if your child's school attendance does not improve, result in a referral being made to Startwell 0 - 19 Service who will help you to ensure your child's regular school attendance.
- Further poor school attendance by your child may result in legal action being taken against you by the local authority which is by a referral to the Attendance Enforcement Team. You may initially be issued with an Education Penalty Notice (fine) after first being given a written warning.
- See the information provided below with regards to the Educational Penalty Notice.

### What is an Education Penalty Notice?

An Education Penalty Notice is a fine issued to parents or carers and can be either £60 per parent or carer or per child (if the payment is made with 21 days or receipt) or £120 per parent or carer or per child (if paid after this, but within 28 days). Education Penalty Notices are issued by first class post to your home and will explain how and where to send your payment. You must pay the whole of the amount owing in one payment. You cannot pay in instalments or just pay part of the amount.

### What does the law say about non-attendance?

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents or carers may be taken to court and prosecuted if their child does not attend school regularly and their absences are unauthorised (or in other words, the school cannot or has not given permission for them to be off school).

In 2003, the Anti-Social Behaviour Act provided an alternative means of tackling non-attendance in schools. Under Section 23 of the Act, Local Education Authorities and other designated bodies were given the powers to issue Education Penalty Notices to parents or carers who are considered capable of, but unwilling to work towards improving their child's attendance.

### How will I know when I am going to receive an Education Penalty Notice?

Before Education Penalty Notices are issued, you will receive a written warning which will explain the extent of your child's non-attendance and the possibility of you receiving a Penalty Notice if their attendance does not improve in 15 days. During this period, your child must not have any further unauthorised absences from school. There is no limit to the number of times a formal warning of a possible Education Penalty Notice issue may be made in any particular case. How many absences will result in the issuing of an Education Penalty Notice? A minimum of 10 sessions (or 5 school days) which are classed as unauthorised absences during the current term and this also applies for taking leave during the current term without the permission of the school.

### Can you appeal against an Education Penalty Notice?

There isn't a legal right of appeal after an Education Penalty Notice has been issued. You can, however, contact the issuer if you have a complaint, for example, if you believe that the Education Penalty Notice has been issued to the wrong person.

### What happens if you don't pay the Education Penalty Notice?

If you don't pay an Education Penalty Notice within 28 days of receipt, Startwell 0 - 19 Service can take you to court (the Magistrates court) under the Education Act for the original offence of poor attendance by your child. If proven, you may be fined anything up to £2500 and/or be sentenced to up to 3 months in prison. In addition, you may be subject to a court order, for example, a Parenting Order.

### Will I be taken to court if I pay the Education Penalty Notice but my child is still missing school?

If you pay the Education Penalty Notice within 28 days of receipt, you won't be taken to court for the period of absences covered in the Education Penalty Notice. If, however, your child continues to have periods of unauthorised absences which are not covered in the Notice after the payment of the Education Penalty Notice, you may be taken to court – depending on the circumstances.

### What kind of unauthorised absences result in the issuing of an Education Penalty Notice?


- Where students are openly truanting.
- Absences from school of which parents or carers are aware, but that aren't authorised by the school.
- Holidays taken in term time which the head teacher has not authorised.
- An unacceptable delayed return from an extended holiday if the parents or carers haven't got permission beforehand from the school.
- Regular late arrival at school (after the Register has closed).
- For more information on Education Penalty Notices please visit the Department for Education Website [www.gov.uk/dfes](http://www.gov.uk/dfes)

How will absences from school affect my child's progress at school?

Absences will affect:

- Attainment levels – the quality of school work and qualifications gained will be significantly lower if attendance is lower. This has been shown by data analysis and research both in Wigan and nationally
- School routine – disrupting your child's learning and that of other students by the missing of vital coursework.
- The chances of children and young people being involved in anti-social behaviour may increase as attendance at school decreases.
- A child or young person's general well-being and long term life opportunities may be negatively affected by the missing of positive experiences associated with school and learning.
- Improving regular attendance at school is therefore a key priority, both locally and nationally
- It may, in certain circumstances, be appropriate for the local authority (Gateway 0 - 19 Service) to begin legal action to enforce the child's school attendance



Adopted by the Board of Governors and recorded in the Minutes of the meeting held on:  8 Feb 2018	  J Holland Chair of Governors
Policy reviewed by the Headteacher on:	  C BRAMWELL Headteacher
Policy to be reviewed:	February 2019