



Pupil Attendance & Absence Policy

Policy History

September 2024	Policy renewed	Steph Watson (Attendance Lead)
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1 Aims

Wistaston Church Lane Academy aims to work together with parents to ensure that children of compulsory age attend both regularly and punctually. We recognise that every stakeholder has a role and responsibilities to play in attendance and this policy aims to make these clear.

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, aiming for 100% attendance or as close as possible
- 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
- Promote and support punctuality in attending lessons

‘Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is good reason for absence’.

2 Legislation

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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

[Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

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 Body (Local Governing Board)

The Local 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

David Hastie is the LGB member responsible for attendance and reviews the data termly as part of the safeguarding audit.

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 LAB members
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
- Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
- Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
- Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

3.3 The (interim) 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
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The interim designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Watson and can be contacted via the school office on (01270) 663619 or via email: admin@wistaston.cheshire.sch.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
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs Clifford and can be contacted via the school office on (01270) 663619 or via email: admin@wistaston.cheshire.sch.uk.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. This needs to be by 9.00am each morning.

3.6 School office 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 (Arbor)
- Signpost parents to the attendance team in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.35am 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
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

3.9 Attendance Expectations

Wistaston Church Lane Academy has high expectations for learners' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and learners. Learners will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

From time to time a member of school staff will undertake a 'Late Gate' check, greeting late arrivals at the main entrance to the school

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the school attendance lead, but you can approach senior leaders or the attendance officer at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. The school expects parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models and to celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

Learners will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to their class teacher.

4 Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic 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, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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.

The times of the start and close of the school day for all learners at Wistaston Church Lane Academy are:

- The children can arrive from 8.40am when the gates open
- The register for AM registration will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.10am.
- The register for the PM registration will be taken at 1pm in Reception and KS1 and 1.15pm in KS2
- The end of the school day is at 3.15pm for Reception and Key Stage 1, and 3.20pm for the rest of the school.

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 8.40am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff on 01270 663619 or via email: admin@wistaston.cheshire.sch.uk.

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.

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 and pupils must always attend school prior to the appointment and again afterwards if this is practical to do so.

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

The school day starts at 8.40am when children can begin to come into school

- Registers are taken at 8.50am and your child will receive a late mark 'L' if they are not in by that time
- Children arriving after 8.50am are required to come into school via the school office.
- They must be accompanied by a parent/carer who must sign them in and provide a reason for their lateness, which is recorded
- At 9.10am the registers will be closed. In accordance with [DFE School Attendance Guidance](#), if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site - 'U', but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding lateness

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:

- Contact 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 make a home visit or contact Children's Services, or the police if there are concerns about the child's safety or welfare

- 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

Parents/carers can access their child's attendance data at any time by viewing the dashboard on their Arbor account. A paper copy of the child's attendance data is provided at parents evening and with the end of year report.

Letters will be sent out when pupil absence triggers concerns. This includes if a child is late on more than five occasions in a term.

5 Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and submitted via the admin email address to the headteacher. The school may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** (that are defined as exceptional circumstances) 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

Further details can be obtained in the 'Absence request during term time' document.

5.2 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.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice. If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days. If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6 Strategies for promoting attendance

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer, supported by the senior leadership team (SLT), will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance such as part-time timetables
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents (templates in appendices)
 - Having a regular tutor review
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams
 - Using fixed penalty notices
 - Creating attendance clinics
 -

The school will use attendance data to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the learners whom the intervention is designed to target.

Part-time Timetables

As part of the framework for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after, and care leavers (Ofsted June 2015) local authorities are required to provide detailed data on school age children in their area who are not in receipt of full-time education and

schools are similarly expected to maintain data on students of compulsory school age who are on their roll but attending on a part-time timetable.

A part-time timetable is a possible time limited intervention that may be discussed with parent/carer and learner with the aim to return the learner to full-time education as quickly as possible.

The Local authority has published guidance for all schools and UTC's on the use of part-time timetables for learners of compulsory school age (the term after their fifth birthday to the last Friday in June following their 16th birthday)

All schools are required to return information on children who are on part-time tables within five days of the pupil starting or ending a part-time timetable. The school will adhere to [guidance](#) from Cheshire East when formulating a part-time timetable.

Positive Attendance Recognition

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- Weekly Newsletters
- End of Term Certificates

7 Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

- 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 Local Governing Board (LGB).

7.2 Analysing attendance

- 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

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers 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

7.4 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
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance including the education welfare management service commissioned by the academy
- Introduce reasonable adjustments for pupils whose attendance is affected by ill health, both physical and mental

Persistent absentees are defined as children whose attendance is below 90%. However, the procedures outlined below may apply to children whose attendance is above 96% but where there are concerns about deteriorating attendance or where patterns are emerging, e.g. regular absences on particular days or persistent lateness.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and annually by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Local Governing Board (LGB).

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour and Relationships 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
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open

Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2 – Information for parents

ATTENDANCE

WITH EFFECT FROM 19 AUGUST 2024

WHAT THE NEW RULES MEAN FOR ME

I'm a single parent of one child and we want to go on holiday for a week.

Your holiday will not be authorised and you must talk to the school before you book anything.

Because your child will miss 5 school days you will be given a penalty notice fine.

The fine is £160 but if you pay it in 21 days it will be reduced to £80.

1

£160



FOR EVERY CHILD A PENALTY IS GIVEN



+£160

+£160

+£160

+£160

4 children & 1 parent = £640

Reduced to £320 if paid in 21 days

IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE

3

10 IN 10

If your child is absent for 10 or more sessions in 10 weeks and their absences are unauthorised, the school will consider prosecution.

1 DAY = 2 SESSIONS

FOR A FAMILY OF TWO PARENTS



+£160

+£160

+£160

+£160

4 children & 2 parents = £1280

Reduced to £640 if paid in 21 days

If in any period of not more than 3 years, your child has a 2nd and 3rd leave of absence or pattern of irregular attendance...

5



2ND TIME

2 parents and...

1 child - £320

2 children = £640

3 children = £960

4 children = £1280

No discount for early payment

3RD TIME

A penalty notice fine will not be given.

Your case will be taken to court.

A magistrate can fine each parent £2500 for each child.

1 parent & 4 children = £10,000

2 parents & 4 children = £20,000



FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT

[gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)