

# Attendance & Punctuality Policy

## West Hill Primary School



**Approved by:** Brian Varney

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## 1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Safeguarding pupils to ensure they have access to the educational opportunities made available to them by law.
- Expecting high levels of attendance and punctuality to improve pupils' achievement.
- Achieving a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic medical or other conditions.
- Creating a culture in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the 'norm' and highly valued by the school.
- Raising awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Supporting parents and carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.
- 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.

## Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is key to pupils being able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities made available to them by law. Governors and staff at West Hill Primary School share an understanding of the importance of pupils having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Although parents and carers have the legal responsibility for getting their children to school regularly and on time, the head teacher, governors and staff at West Hill work together with external agencies to ensure that pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to help this happen.

Pupils who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Pupils who are regularly absent from school develop large gaps in their learning. This gap means that progress is slowed and their ability to meet or exceed related learning expectations is reduced. A child whose attendance drops to or below 90% each year, over time at primary school will have missed two whole terms of learning

## 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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)

- [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. School procedures

#### 3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50 on each school day; pupils are expected to be in the playground lining up with their teachers at this time.

School registers close at 9.20am; any child arriving after this time is recorded as having arrived after registers close.

#### 3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

**Please contact the school office by calling 0208 874 5900**

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

#### 3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Arrange 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 school office should be informed immediately of the time and date of the appointment.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

### 3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed at 9.20am will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

The school day ends at 3.15pm. Children must be picked up promptly; if not the school will contact the parent and the child's name and reason for lateness written in the late book. Children's services may be contacted if it is 4pm and the parent/carer has not contacted the school to inform us as to why they are late collecting their child and has not responded to attempts to contact them.

### 3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer the school attendance officer will contact the family.
- If by the third day of consecutive absence if there has been no contact between either the school or parent/carer a home visit will be carried out following the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Fast Track to Attendance Panel meetings will be held half termly for those children and parents/carers whose attendance is a cause for concern. This panel will be attended by the Education Welfare Officer, school nurse, head teacher and the school's attendance officer.
- Where pupils' attendance fails to make consistent expected improvement between 90% and 95%, Early Help will be provided to support parents/carers.
- Attendance letter in the first instance informing the parent/carer of the attendance record.
- Improvement – No further action, monitoring continues.
- No improvement – Request for parents to attend a School Attendance Meeting with the Pastoral team.
- Any pupil who becomes Persistently Absent (P.A.) at 90% will be formally monitored, Early help procedures will be followed to support the family, a parenting contract may be issued or a pastoral support programme may be put in place.
- Nursery and Reception (non –statutory age pupils) parents and carers will be supported through the Early Help process to support full engagement with the education of their children and where attendance and punctuality is a cause for concern.
- **Children Missing in Education procedures will be followed as appropriate on a case by case basis. Please see the associated guidelines in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.**

### 3.6 Changing Schools

It is important that if families are required to change schools, parents/carers complete a school transfer form, if it is within Wandsworth Borough, available from the school office and Pupil Services at the Town Hall. If the family is moving out of the borough a form can be obtained from the pupil services department of the new borough.

Parents and carers are expected to meet the head teacher to discuss the proposed move. Procedures will then be followed by the school for the off-rolling pupils pursuant to statutory and safeguarding requirements.

### **3.7 Reporting to parents**

Parents and carers are given their child's attendance record annually in the written end of year report and at every parents evenings.

## **4. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence**

No parents or carers can demand leave of absence for their child/children as a right.

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

If parents wish to request an absence during term time, forms are available from the school office. No requests for holidays are authorised during term time.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3

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

### **4.2 Legal sanctions**

All holidays are unauthorised and are referred to the Education Welfare Service Courts Officer.

A fine may be issued to parents and carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a 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.

Please click on the link for more information

[http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/info/200474/student\\_welfare/37/school\\_attendance\\_and\\_truancy/2](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/info/200474/student_welfare/37/school_attendance_and_truancy/2)

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

A 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

## 5. Strategies for promoting attendance

We expect that all parents/carers/persons who have day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- Ensure regular attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school each day punctually and properly prepared for the school day.

West Hill Primary School will:

- Emphasise the importance of good attendance and take positive steps to encourage it.
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children.
- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns.

The school carries out attendance initiatives and these may take the form of:

- 95% to 100% attendance leaves, named each half term and placed on the attendance tree. At the end of the school year these are entered into a prize draw and the child whose name is drawn out will be bought a bicycle.
- Each class has its own weekly attendance chart.
- Each week the Benny the 'Be There Badger' is awarded to the class with the best attendance.
- The class that has had the badger to stay most over a half-term holds a badger tea party.
- 95% and above certificates are issued at the end of each term.
- Stickers are issued for improved punctuality and attendance.

## 6. Attendance monitoring

The school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

The school will:

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils from Nursery to year 6 at least twice daily.
- Monitor individual pupil's attendance.
- Contact parents as soon as possible on the first day of absence where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and Local Authority's expectations with regard to regular school attendance. If by the third day of consecutive absence if there has been no contact between either the school or parent/carer a home visit will be carried out following the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Refer irregular or concerning patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service.

- Meet where possible, the requirements of the UN Convention – The Rights of the Child, by ensuring that children are consulted in all decisions that relate to them.

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 is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

West Hill's attendance registers are completed electronically and are stored on SIMS (School Information Management System) and Target Tracker, our assessment and tracking software. We use this to track the attendance of individual pupils in order to identify if there are any children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and to monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

### **7.1 The governing board**

The governing board is 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.

### **7.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **7.3 Pastoral Care Lead**

The Pastoral Care Lead:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level

- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher

- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

- Arranges school attendance panel meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

- Arranges Early Help and Team Around the Child (TAC) Meetings as appropriate

### **7.4 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.

## 7.5 Office staff

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

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the head teacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with and approved by the governing board.

## 9. Links with other policies

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
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<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>
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<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