



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Introduction

Excellent attendance promotes excellent learning. Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

Westfield School believes that regular school attendance is crucial in allowing children to maximise educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Westfield School values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify early the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

Westfield School believes attendance is a shared responsibility, involving the whole school community and local community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation - it is a thread that runs through all aspects of school improvement, and is supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

### Principal Aims

Westfield School believes the following important principles underpin our approach to managing attendance:

- Pupils and parents understand the issues and procedures for attendance and punctuality.
- All school staff, including governors, administrative and ancillary staff understand the issues and procedures for attendance and punctuality
- Clear procedures for enabling pupils to come to school
- Attendance issues are addressed in the curriculum
- Parents and pupils have the opportunity to raise concerns and share in addressing those concerns
- Allocate resources e.g. time, people, space to support the policy
- Reward students, where appropriate, who have good attendance and those who strive to improve their attendance
- Identifying patterns of absence and intervening early. Patterns of attendance are established early in a school career. Children who miss significant amounts of their education in primary schools are more likely to truant later on.
- Actions for failing to ensure regular attendance are fully understood by the whole school community and parents.

### Responsibilities

There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement. Of pupils who miss more than 50 per cent of school only three per cent achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including Maths and English.

Westfield School believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

**The Board of Governors will:**

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents/carers.
- **Have a named senior manager to lead on attendance (SAL)**
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Have clear systems in school to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site (NSB)
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

A positive learning climate is essential for promoting good attendance

**The Senior Leadership Team will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure staff are aware of the Attendance Policy Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Have a named senior manager (SAL) to lead on attendance (SR)
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Board of Governors
- Have systems in place to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Collate and analyse attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to develop solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Document interventions to a high standard should legal proceedings be instigated

**Form Tutors will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve. A positive learning climate is essential for promoting good attendance.
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Document interventions to a high standard should legal proceedings be instigated

**Parents will:**

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their daughter's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home

- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, home work, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child on family holidays during term-time.

### **Legal Framework**

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement. This responsibility is undertaken by Education Welfare.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, expect schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

### **Categorising absence**

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation and or evidence for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

#### **Illness**

In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Where there are repeated absences due to reported illness parents may be asked to provide medical evidence. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

#### **Medical/Dental Appointments**

Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.

#### **Other Authorised Circumstances**

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement.

#### **Excluded (No alternative provision made)**

Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's form teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

### **Leave of absence during term time.**

Amendments to the 2006 pupil regulations remove references to family holiday, extended leave and the statutory threshold of ten school days .(Authorised at the discretion of the Headmistress)

The amendments make clear that:

**The Headmistress may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headmistress should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted'**

Leave of absence during term time is entirely at the discretion of the Headmistress and is not a parental right.

All decisions in relation to whether leave of absence is granted (authorised) or not (unauthorised) should be applied consistently and equitably.

### **Application Process**

- **A parent requesting leave of absence during term time should make the application in writing at least two weeks in advance**
- School may invite the parent into school to discuss the reasons for the application and the impact the absence may have on the child's education
- The school will reply to all applications. All replies will be signed and dated by the Headmistress
- If leave is not granted, the reason for not authorising a request will be clearly stated, explaining why exceptional circumstances have not been met, in addition to the possible consequences of disregarding the refusal to grant absence. All replies should be signed and dated by the Headmistress
- If leave is granted, the length of authorised absence will be clearly stated including the date the child is expected to return to school including possible consequences if the child fails to return on that date. All replies will be signed and dated by the Headmistress
- If a parent removes their child from school without requesting leave of absence or without authorisation from the Headmistress may receive a Penalty Notice or Fine

**(The Local Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices which was reviewed and revised in September 2013 states that a minimum absence of ten sessions (five school days) which are unauthorised must be recorded against the pupils name within a 6-12 week period).**

If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school **may** take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their school place.

### **Religious Observance**

Westfield School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

It is reasonable for a parent to request their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body.

Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

### **Late Arrival**

Registration begins at 8.30am. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late (L). The register will close at 8.40am. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late and they are required to sign in at the

school office on arrival to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school. The school office will follow up any un-notified absences by 9.30 am.

Absence will only be **authorised** if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, evidence of attendance at a medical appointment.

#### **Unauthorised absence.**

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.

#### **Deletions from the Register**

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school has tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence.

#### **Using Attendance Data**

Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern (all information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998). Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

#### **Support Systems**

The school recognises that poor attendance is often a sign that there are more serious issues going on in a child's life. This may be linked to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

Westfield School also recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs or those with physical or mental health needs.

The school will implement strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance on report cards
- Friendship groups
- PSHEE
- Reward systems for attendance
- Additional learning support

Where parents/carers fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Westfield School will refer to Education Welfare.

#### **Legal Sanctions - Prosecution.**

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence. The school will provide Education Welfare with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will

appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

### WESTFIELD MODEL FOR PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

Attendance	Key Person/s	Possible Action(s)	Support
100% -98%	Form Tutor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage attendance</li> <li>• Ensure all absence is followed up by phone call or letter</li> <li>• Accurate and consistent marking of registers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginning of academic year letters home for positive attendance</li> </ul>
98% -95%	Form Tutor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage positive attendance</li> <li>• Remind students of attendance targets</li> <li>• Inform Headmistress of any deteriorating attendance patterns and follow up.</li> <li>• Contact parent/carer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued school support</li> </ul>
95% -93%	Form Tutor/ Nominated SLT responsible for Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact parent/carer</li> <li>• Interview pupil</li> <li>• Letter home and/or arrange meeting with parent/carer</li> <li>• Agree attendance plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for students in school - target set</li> </ul>
93% -86%	Form Tutor/ Nominated SLT responsible for Attendance/Safeguarding Officer/ Headmistress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter home-Review action plan</li> <li>• Meet with pupil and parent/carer</li> <li>• Advise parent /carer no further absence due to illness will be authorised without evidence</li> <li>• Letter home advising possible sanctions eg referral</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further meeting with parents and/or home visit</li> <li>• Discussion at a student meeting as appropriate.</li> </ul>
90% and below			
85% and below	Form Tutor/ Nominated SLT responsible for Attendance/Safeguarding Officer/ Headmistress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warning Letter</li> <li>• Penalty Notice</li> <li>• Education Supervision Order</li> <li>• Prosecution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued support from school and student support and other agencies where appropriate</li> </ul>

**STAFF SHOULD ALWAYS RECORD PHONE CALLS, MEETINGS AND ACTIONS**

PARENT/TEACHER RECORD/REVIEW FORM

<b>DATE:</b>  <b>TIME:</b>	<b>NAME OF PUPIL:</b>	<b>CLASS/ YEAR GROUP:</b>
<b>CONVERSATION BETWEEN:</b>		
<b>BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE CONVERSATION:</b>		
<b>ACTION:</b>	<b>DEADLINE:</b>	