



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Produced in conjunction with guidance from Working Together to improve School Attendance 2024

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 can 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 low 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 considers the latest guidance from Working Together to improve school attendance 2024.

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 can raise concerns and share in addressing those concerns
- 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
- 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. Children with the highest attainment at KS2 and KS4 have higher rates of attendance.

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 – Kate Quinn - Deputy Head
- 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, 2024 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

Working together to improve attendance Strategy

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

- **Expect** - Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.
- **Monitor** - Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.
- **Listen and understand** When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
- **Facilitate support** Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include family help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.
- **Formalise support** Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract.

To manage and improve attendance effectively the School will:

- Actively promote a culture that values good attendance to all.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with the families to remove them.
- 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.
- Have a clear attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand and ensure the implementation of it.
- Ensure staff are aware of the Attendance Policy Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2024 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Have a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Board of Governors in the Safeguarding Termly updates.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow up absence
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils requiring support and put effective strategies in place.
- Ensure interventions and strategies are evaluated.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and provide them with additional support.

Parents will:

- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home. 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 their child to look to the future and aspire
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return.
- 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.
- Avoid taking their child on family holidays during term-time, these cannot be authorised by the school.

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, aptitude and 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 5th 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.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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 – code \
- Absent – code /
- 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 and the appropriate code. 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.

Absence will be categorised as the following codes for differing authorised and unauthorised absences:

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
K	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the local authority
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school

Authorised Absences

CODE	DEFINITION	SCENARIO
AUTHORISED ABSENCE		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
C1	Leave of absence	Pupil should be participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad
C2	Leave of absence – Part time timetable	For compulsory school aged pupil who is on an agreed part time timetable
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	Pupil has been suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision has been made
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

J1	Leave of absence	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/admission to another educational institution
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Yr11/13 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a mobile child due to the parent travelling from place to place for business/trade
Y1	Unable to attend due to lack of transport	Here the school or local authority normally provides transport which is not available and the school is beyond reasonable walking distance
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidable out of use
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school being unexpectedly closed	Where the whole school was planned to be open but remained closed unexpectedly
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	If the pupil is in police detention or on remand to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Pupil travel to or attendance at the school would be contrary to restrictions set by the Secretary of State for Health
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent

Unauthorised Absence

CODE	DEFINITION	SCENARIO
UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	The pupil arrived late and after 30 minutes from the start of the session

Other Absences

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

All absences are initially unauthorised until a reason has been provided for the absence and the register must be updated. This should happen as soon as possible and certainly within 5 school days of absence.

Additionally, the School has a legal duty to report certain attendance issues to the local authority:

- 10 days of unauthorised absence other than for reasons of sickness or leave of absence
- Failure to attend regularly

In these circumstances the school is required to report the circumstances as soon as possible to the local authority in which the pupil lives (see appendix).

Family holidays can no longer be approved but leave of absence can be granted in exceptional circumstances. The Government is keen that schools consider every request individually.

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 Headmaster
- 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 Headmaster
- 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 Headmaster

If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school **may** refer the pupil to the appropriate LA as a child missing in education

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.

Day to Day Processes and First Hour Response

Alongside accurate recording of attendance and absence, we have robust day to day processes to track and follow up absence and poor punctuality which are rigorously applied across the school. Our arrangements include:

- To proactively manage lateness - Registration begins at 8.30am. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late (L). The register will close at 8.50am. 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 break – 10.00 am.
- Parents to contact the school when their child is absent to explain the reason. Parents will be contacted on the first day of absence where a reason has not been provided. If absence continues without explanation, further contact will be made to ensure safeguarding.
- The school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil. This is good practice to give the school additional options to contact a responsible adult.
- We will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. If there are concerns regular meetings will be held with the parents of pupils who the school consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gap

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 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, including the Local Authority or DfE, if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern. Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform individual intervention or 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.

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

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Regular updates on attendance sent to parents
- Friendship groups
- PSHEE
- Reward systems for attendance
- Additional learning support and liaison with parents and pupils

Where parents/carers fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Westfield School will refer to the relevant local authority and Children Missing in Education

Appendix

Local Authority contacts for reporting pupil change of school

Local Authority	Contact e-mail
Northumberland	schooladmissions@northumberland.gov.uk
Newcastle	accessandinclusion@newcastle.gov.uk or via https://www.servicetoschools.org.uk/Page/3672
South Tyneside	CYPSPReferrals@southtyneside.gov.uk
North Tyneside	Sara.irving@northtyneside.gov.uk
Gateshead	LTMigrationForms@Gateshead.gov.uk
Sunderland	attendanceteam@sunderland.gov.uk

WESTFIELD MODEL FOR PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

Attendance	Key Person/s	Possible Action(s)	Support
96% and above	Form Tutor	• Encourage continued good attendance. • Use rewards system for top attenders	• Termly postcards home for positive attendance and House Points
90%-96%	Form Tutor	• Encourage positive attendance • Remind students of attendance targets and discuss reasons for absence with pupil • Inform KQ of any deteriorating attendance patterns and follow up. • Contact parent/carers if concerns raised	• Continued school support • Additional Support for pupils in school if appropriate
80% -90%	SLT responsible for Attendance and DSL if appropriate	• Meet with pupil and parent/carers • Agree attendance plan if below 90% for an extended period (1 term) • Advise parent /carers no further absence due to illness will be authorised without evidence	• Regular contact with parents • Offer of support e.g. counsellor
80% and below	SLT responsible for Attendance / DSL / Headmaster	Further action discussed and further actions to potentially include: • Multi-agency support • Involvement of Clennells • Notifying LA	• Continued support from school and student support and other agencies where appropriate

Links to Other Policies:

- **Safeguarding Policy and KCSIE 2025**
- **Working Together to Improve Attendance 2024**
- **Children Missing from Education Policy**