

Westfield Primary School



Attendance

Date Adopted: March 2023

Headteacher: Miss S Pope

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Pope'.

Review Date: March 2025

Previous Version	September 2022
Changes Made	Appendix 2 added

Contents

1. Aims.....	3
2. Legislation and guidance.....	3
3. Roles and responsibilities	3
4. Recording attendance.....	5
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence.....	7
6. Strategies for promoting attendance	8
7. Attendance monitoring.....	8
8. Monitoring arrangements.....	9
9. Links with other policies	9
Appendix 1: attendance codes.....	9
Appendix 2: Attendance Letters 90-96%	

1 Aims

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
- 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

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2 Legislation and guidance

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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [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 Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The 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

The Link Governor for attendance is: Mrs Hayley Davies

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 governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The 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
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is *Miss Sandra Pope (Headteacher)* and can be contacted via head.westfield@haltonlearning.net

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 and reports concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance/Headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is *Mrs Elaine Kochan* and can be contacted via admin.westfield@haltonlearning.net

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers/Supply staff are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information via SIMS.

3.6 School Admin staff

School Admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Follow the first day response procedures

3.7 Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every and on time
- Report their child's absence before 8:30am 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
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day and on time

4 Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an 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 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.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9:25am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:50pm for Phase R - 3 and 1:05pm for phase 4 - 6.

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 8:30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school.

- Telephone call and speak to a member of staff
- Telephone call and leave a voice message
- Text message via the School Spider App
- Email to sec.westfield@haltonlearning.net

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 and provides evidence of the appointment.

To request leave of absence please present evidence of the appointment at the school office.

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.

If the authenticity of the appointment is in doubt, the absence will be counted as unauthorised.

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

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as late(after register has closed), using the appropriate code

Missed minutes of learning due to lateness will be monitored and where there are concerns, the Headteacher will contact parents and carers.

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 use our graduated response:

- Call/text the pupil's parent/carer by 9:45am 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 conduct a home visit or if there are significant concerns the contact social care
- 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

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels by sending home attendance certificates each half term. If there are concerns with a child's attendance then parents/carers will be asked to meet with the Headteacher.

We will also inform parents if lateness is a concern and report how many minutes of learning have been missed by their child.

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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one off events that are unavoidable.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 3 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the website or by collecting a form from the school office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** may 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
- Elite sporting competitions

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.

If issued with a fine, or 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.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The 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 or withdraw the notice.

6 Strategies for promoting attendance and punctuality

The school promotes attendance and punctuality by:

- 100% attendance certificate each half term and full term
- 100% badge for a full academic year plus a prize draw for £10 Amazon voucher
- 97.5% or above weekly award (Astro time)
- Class with the best attendance – announced in assembly and Astro reward
- Class with the best punctuality – announced in assembly and Astro reward
- Pupil draw for £5 voucher for ‘On time to school today’ or ‘In time week’
- Individual pupil mention on our Attendance Noticeboard
- Individual ‘dip in the box’ for improved attendance or punctuality
- Parent call home for improved attendance

7 Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, 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 governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- 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

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teacher 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

8 Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by the Headteacher.

9 Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

9.1.1 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
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
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 after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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
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

Appendix 2

Attendance Letters

<insert date>

Dear <insert parent/carer name>

Stage 1 Attendance letter

<insert pupil name> Attendance – XX%

At Westfield Primary School we have a strong focus on attendance to ensure that all pupils make excellent progress and achieve their very best potential.

Our records show that <insert pupil name>'s attendance is XX%. As this is just falling below the national expected minimum of 96% we are therefore writing to offer additional support. We understand that this could be due to illness.

Good attendance is key to ensuring that pupils progress well at school.

We are hopeful that your child's attendance will improve and we wish to offer our support and ask that you communicate to us any provision or assistance which you feel may be beneficial or communicate any reasons why you feel that improved attendance may be difficult so that we can work together in supporting your child.

The aim is for your child's attendance to improve within the next 4 weeks in order to avoid having to issue a stage two letter. If you would like to discuss anything in relation your <inset pupil name>'s attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Miss S Pope
Headteacher

Stage 2 Attendance Letter

Dear <insert parent/carer name>

INVITATION TO STAGE 2 ATTENDANCE ACTION PLAN MEETING

<insert pupil name> Re: Attendance – XX%

At Westfield Primary School we have a strong focus on attendance to ensure that all pupils make excellent progress and achieve their very best potential.

Our records show that <insert pupil name> attendance is XX%. As this is now below the national expected minimum of 96% and a previous letter has been issued to offer support, we are therefore now writing to invite you to come in to school so that we can discuss the matter and see if there is anything we can do to help, and form an Action Plan.

I look forward to seeing you at this meeting. If this is inconvenient, please contact me as soon as possible to rearrange a more suitable time.

Yours sincerely,

Miss S Pope
Headteacher

Stage 3 Attendance Letter

Dear <insert parent/carer name>

LETTER AFTER FAILURE TO ATTEND STAGE 3 MEETING

<insert pupil name> Re: Attendance – XX%

As you failed to attend a meeting on <day, date and time>, you are now invited to attend a meeting to be held at the <insert school> on <day, date and time>.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss a way forward in improving your child's attendance. A representative of the Local Authority will be present at this meeting.

You are urged to attend this meeting as failure to do so may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued against you.

Yours sincerely,

Miss S Pope
Headteacher

Stage 4 Attendance Letter

Dear <insert parent/carer name>

FIRST WARNING

<insert pupil name> Re: Attendance – XX%

I am writing to express my concern regarding <insert pupil name> continued irregular attendance. According to the class register, between <date> and <date> <insert pupil name> has been marked absent for **XX sessions, of which XX were authorised and XX were unauthorised**. <insert pupil name> has completed **XX full weeks in school out of a possible XX weeks**. A copy of the percentage attendance register is enclosed.

Westfield Primary School has made efforts to engage with you in attempting to improve this situation but despite this there has been no improvement in your child's attendance.

Such attendance is not acceptable and I must remind you that S.444, Education Act 1996 requires you to make sure that your child comes to school, on time, every time the school is open. I am writing this letter to give you an opportunity to make sure that from now on and in future, your child attends school regularly.

Failure to do so may result in the Local Authority taking one of the following actions:

a) Initiating legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under S.444(1) Education Act 1996. If convicted under this section, you may be fined up to £1,000.

b) Initiating legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under S.444(1A) Education Act 1996. If convicted of this offence you may be fined up to £2,500 or be sent to prison for up to 3 months or both.

I now look forward to your co-operation in ensuring an immediate and sustained improvement in your child's school attendance.

If you wish to discuss this matter, please contact me at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Dear <insert parent/carer name>

FINAL WARNING

<insert pupil name> Re: Attendance – XX%

On <insert date>, we wrote to you concerning <insert pupil name> irregular attendance at <insert school>.

Unfortunately, I now have to contact you again as <insert pupil name> has continued to be absent from school during the last **XX** weeks.

Obviously, such a record is not acceptable, and I now have to warn you that unless there is an immediate improvement in <insert pupil name> school attendance, the Local Authority will have no option but to instigate one of the following options:

- a) **Initiating legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under S.444(1) Education Act 1996. If convicted under this section, you may be fined up to £1000.**
- b) **Initiating legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under S.444(1A) Education Act 1996. If convicted of this offence you may be fined up to £2,500 or be sent to prison for up to 3 months or both.**

Please contact me to discuss.

Yours sincerely,

Miss S Pope
Headteacher