

THE WESTGATE SCHOOL

Hampshire's First 4-16 'All Through' School

*"The Westgate School is a community of learners where partnerships inspire success for all:
learning together – achieving excellence"*

Headteacher: Mrs F A Dean, MA (Ed)

Initial Policy date	November 2024	Next scheduled review	November 2025
Governor approved		Key person/people	DHT
Model Policy	HCC September 2024	Model localised	
Pupil leadership team review	N/A		

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Introduction/Aim

At The Westgate School we believe that regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. We value the attendance of all pupils. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can put them at risk of wider harm. There is a [wide range of evidence](#) as to the health and wellbeing benefits of school-age education. [Research](#) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.

Our attendance policy aims to give clear guidance to colleagues, parents, pupils, and governors to:

- Promote good attendance, enabling pupil's achievement by establishing the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Recognise the key role of all colleagues in promoting good attendance.
- Provide a clear framework for monitoring and responding to pupil absences, acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- Promote positive support systems and advocate multi-agency approaches to improve attendance.
- Make parents aware of their legal responsibilities and ensure their children have access to the education to which they are entitled.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour, and inclusive learning. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant legislation.

Legal Framework

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](#).

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 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.

The government expects all schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly. In accordance with the Education Act 1996, we will work with parents and carers and the Local Authority to ensure that parents and carers are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

A "Parent" is defined as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not.
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

Roles and Responsibilities

At The Westgate School, we believe that improving school attendance is everyone's business. It is a shared responsibility by governors, all school colleagues, parents, pupils, the wider school community and multi-agency partners. We aim to always work in partnership with our parents. The Senior Attendance Champion is Mr B. Pearce (Deputy Headteacher), who has responsibility all-through for continuing to support all pupils to maintain strong attendance and punctuality.

The Governors of The Westgate School recognises the importance of school attendance and promotes it through the school's ethos and across its policies. They may take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, colleagues, pupils, and parents so that children attend school every day and are safeguarded.
- Identifying a member of the governing body – Ruth Luzmore - to lead on attendance matters and ensuring that there is a named senior leader – Ben Pearce DHT - to lead on attendance.
- Prioritising attendance in strategies, such as raising attainment, behaviour and combatting bullying, special educational needs and disabilities, wellbeing, and safeguarding.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties by rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the school's attendance procedures so that consistent attendance support is provided for all pupils.
- Ensuring the schools' attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent attendance support is provided for pupils who require it most by prioritising the resources needed. This includes ensuring schools engage and work effectively with the local authority School Attendance Support Team and wider local partners and services.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing, challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils and processes for support are adapted to the individual needs of pupils including those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker, those pupils under the Virtual School and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Ensuring all school employees receive adequate training on attendance and that relevant employees have access to opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Ensuring that attendance data is shared with the Local Authority or Department for Education in line with statutory reporting deadlines.
- Reviewing the school's Attendance Policy on at least an annual basis, ensuring that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy, which is published and publicised regularly so that it is easily accessible to pupils, parents and employees.

The Senior Leadership Team at The Westgate School will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Form and maintain 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, with a whole school culture that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Make sure all teaching and non-teaching colleagues know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all colleagues, pupils and parents understand. Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure the school have accurate, 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 or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- 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.
- Ensure that there is a named Senior Attendance to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Attend the termly school attendance supporting meetings with the local authority, focusing on those pupils with severe absence, making sure a regularly reviewed plan is in place.

All colleagues at The Westgate School 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.
- Know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need.

The colleagues responsible for attendance will work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support.

Responding to absence

- It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school of any absence, stating the reason for the absence. This must be completed either via EduLink or by calling the school by 9:00am.

- If notification has not been received about a pupils absence parents/carers will be contacted via either telephone or text message.
- If notification is not received as to the reason for absence it will be coded as 'O' unauthorised.
- If absence persists without explanation, or if further information is needed, a home visit may be carried out. Contact with parents/carers will be made where possible before a home visit is conducted but they may be unannounced. Colleagues attending will always be wearing their identification and will expect to see the child in question, if only for a brief moment, to ascertain how they are.
- It may be necessary for the School to either start a 'child absent/missing in education procedure' or to contact the Police.

The Westgate School requests that parents:

- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Ensure their child has regular attendance at school.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, following this with a note wherever possible.
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home and family life.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school, and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance.
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.
- Contact the School if their child is leaving, stating new address, contact number and education provider.

Further information can be found at: [Attendance guidance for parents | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/attendance-guidance-for-parents)

Pupils will:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by the School, parents and through the school timetable.
- Speak to their class teacher, tutor or another colleague if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate equipment and on time for the class.
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

Categorising Absence and Attendance

When marking our registers, we will apply the national codes as outlined and regulated by the Department for Education guidance to accurately record and report attendance.

Leave of Absence

Since September 2013, changes to Government regulations and guidance mean that Headteachers can no longer authorise leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours. All absences associated with a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation during term time will be marked as unauthorised within the register. Any parents known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation may be referred to the Local Authority and be issued with a penalty notice fine or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances. At The Westgate School, leave of absence is only granted at the discretion of the Headteacher and shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances. The Westgate School will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least a month before the planned leave (see Appendix 1). If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Headteacher, and it will be marked as unauthorised. The Westgate School will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

A penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should:

- The parent fail to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave.
- An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the Headteacher but is still taken.
- A longer period is taken more than the agreed number of days.

When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated

The school will only authorise absences in term time for a period of up to 3 days (6 sessions in any one academic year) in very exceptional circumstances such as for: the funeral of a close relative; to visit a relative/close family friend with a terminal illness; a situation where a family is in difficulty with housing and is temporarily re-located; to support provision for a child looked after (eg in foster care) or where a child has responsibilities as a main carer. In line with DfE and Local Authority expectations The School will not authorise absences for family holidays or to allow for extended periods of travel, holidays or in order to enable families to book cheaper travel options. Authorised absence of up to 3 days (6 sessions) for compassionate reasons will be granted for children of those serving in the Armed Forces where a parent is commencing active service overseas for an extended period of time or retiring from active service.

The 1996 Education Act also sets out the circumstances in which a pupil has not failed to attend school regularly and therefore the parent has not committed an offence.

4.2, 4.3, 4.4 are examples of these. The full list is in the Appendix 5.

Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that a parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must sign out via either the Primary or Secondary Phase reception desks. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a child has an emerging pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent/carers. We will invite parents/carers to attend a support meeting as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may seek

consent from parents/carers and the pupil as appropriate to make a referral to the School Nursing Team and/or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents/carers to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#) and Hampshire policies regarding supporting children with health issues, [Behaviour and attendance resources for schools | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#). We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

The Westgate 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 is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents/Carers are requested to give advance notice to the school. [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) page 86.

Parent travelling for occupational purposes

The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s)/carer(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s)/carer(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents/carers:

- Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents/carers have provided a satisfactory explanation, and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include, but are not limited to:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday.
- Shopping for uniforms.
- Arrangements or appointments for cutting the pupil's hair.
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes.
- An unwillingness to attend school, or inability to attend owing to inadequate personal/family organisation.

- A refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is considered well enough to attend.
- Absences taken without the authorisation of the school.

Our Procedures

Register Keeping, Recording and Late Arrival at School

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by 2016 regulations, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

“Absence” as:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

“Regular” attendance as:

- Attendance at every session the school is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised.

Registers are taken electronically via Sims. In the Primary Phase this is taken once in the morning and once in the afternoon. In the Secondary Phase the register is taken for every session.

In the Primary Phase the school day begins at 8:40am, if a pupil arrives between 8:50am and 9:00am their attendance will be recorded as L (late before registers close). If they arrive after 9:00am, their attendance will be recorded as U (late after registers close). The school day ends for all pupils at 3:20pm.

In the Secondary Phase the school day starts at 8:30am, all pupils are expected to be on the school site by 8:25am and in their tutor rooms for 8:30am. If a pupil arrives in school between 8:35am and 8:50am they recorded as L (late before registers close). If they arrive after 8:50am, their attendance will be recorded as U (late after registers close). If a parent provides a satisfactory explanation this will be recorded as an ‘authorised absence’. In the Secondary Phase the School ends at 3:05pm. Most pupils will leave the site at 2:50pm if they do not have a mentoring session.

Reporting to parents

A pupils’ attendance is live on Edulink at all times. This shows not only a figure for overall attendance but also a breakdown by lesson, the day and the month. The school will regularly inform parents about their child’s attendance and absence levels via the formal school report.

Late Arrival at School

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child arrives at School on time.

Colleagues will contact parents/carers when punctuality becomes a concern. If punctuality does not improve, all further lateness will be unauthorised. If a child then has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10-week period, the School will issue parents/carers with a Penalty Notice.

Colleagues will contact parents/carers when pupils are 'late after the register closes' 3 or more times. If a child is late for 10 sessions, parents/carers can be issued a Penalty Notice.

Pupils are required to be punctual to every lesson and formal session. Lateness in the Secondary Phase will be recorded on the electronic register and will be visible to parents/carers via EduLink. This will be followed up with parents/carers if it becomes a regular occurrence.

Registers are legal records, and all schools must preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date the data was entered. As the attendance register is a record of the pupils present at the time it was taken, the register should only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, all schools must ensure the register shows the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment. On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) whose name is listed in the admission register at the time. The codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and are used to collect statistics. The data helps schools, local authorities, and the government gain a greater understanding of the delivery of education and the level of, and reason for, absence.

Expected absence procedure for parents:

It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school of any absence, stating the reason for the absence. This must be completed either via EduLink or by calling the school by 9:00am.

If notification has not been received about a pupils' absence parents/carers will be contacted via either telephone or text message.

If notification is not received as to the reason for absence it will be coded as 'O' unauthorised.

If absence persists without explanation, or if further information is needed, a home visit may be carried out. Contact with parents/carers will be made where possible before a home visit is conducted but they may be unannounced. Colleagues attending will always be wearing their identification and will expect to see the child in question, if only for a brief moment, to ascertain how they are.

It may be necessary for the School to either start a 'child absent/missing in education procedure' or to contact the Police.

In certain circumstances the school may:

- Visit the home of the pupil.
- Write to the parents of a pupil to highlight attendance or punctuality issues.

- Invite parents to discuss how school can support the family to make improvement.
- Refer to Inclusion Support Service for support, guidance, and advice.
- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through [Inclusion Support Service \(ISS\) | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/inclusion-support-service) and [Behaviour and attendance resources for schools | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/behaviour-and-attendance-resources-for-schools)
- Refer to the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice or to consider prosecution when all other interventions have failed, or an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken.
- Refer the matter to an appropriate external agency for multi-agency support, such as implementing a Family Support Plan or consulting with the Children's Social Care or the police, where there are safeguarding concerns.

Promoting and recognising good attendance and reducing persistent absence

Attendance of all pupils is monitored regularly. Strong attendance or improved attendance and punctuality are recognised in celebration assemblies as well as via postcards or letters home. Parents and carers are informed of attendance via School reports. Live attendance data is also available via EduLink.

Persistent absence is defined as a pupil who is attending less than 90% of the time. This is equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full School year. Where attendance drops below 93% the School will take actions that aim to prevent a pupil from becoming or remaining persistently absent. These actions may include:

- Regular contact with parents/carers to support a pupil improving their attendance or punctuality.
- Regular check ins with the pupil to provide support as well as establish what the barriers may be preventing good attendance and punctuality.
- Use of staged letters: the first indicates a concern about a decline in attendance, successive letters request that parents and carers work in partnership to support an improvement.
- Engagement with external agencies who are involved.
- If, after actions have been taken, the attendance or punctuality does not improve a referral to the Local Authority will be made to seek additional support or a Penalty Notice warning may be issued.

Parents/carers may receive a Penalty Notice if a pupil is absent during a public examination or, formal School assessments, where the dates have been published in advance.

The School has a legal duty to report pupil absence without an explanation for 10 consecutive days to Children's Services (at risk of missing).

Study leave will not automatically be granted in Year 11; therefore, pupils will be expected to attend School in the usual way until told otherwise by their Year Leader. This will be communicated to parents/carers.

Attendance advice and guidance on Gypsy Roma Traveller and Showman families, can be found in the appendices.

Monitor and Analyse attendance

The Westgate School will:

- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. This should go beyond headline attendance percentages and should look at individual pupils, cohorts and year groups (including their punctuality) across the school.
- Use this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers or tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including any special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).
- Undertake frequent individual level analysis to identify the pupils who need support and focus colleague efforts on developing targeted actions for those cases.
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends. This should include analysis of pupils and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes, days of poor attendance and where appropriate, subjects which have low lesson attendance.
- Benchmark attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Monitor in the data the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented. The findings should then be used to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies.
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the board or governing body and local authority when appropriate.

At The Westgate School we will investigate any pupils who are on track to be persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90%.

“Persistent absenteeism” (PA) as:

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

“Severe absence” (SA) as:

- Missing 50% or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

Support Systems

At The Westgate School we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family’s life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child’s attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example: bereavement,

divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

Persistent Absence, Severe Absence and the use of legal interventions

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 days). Absence at this level could cause considerable damage to a child's educational outcomes.

A pupil becomes a 'severe absentee' (SA) when their attendance drops to 50% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 190 sessions (95 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational outcomes.

The attendance of all pupils at our school are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in the section above. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support. [Inclusion Support Service \(ISS\) | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/inclusion-support-service)

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution via the Magistrates' Court.

Parents found guilty of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

In line with Hampshire County Council guidance, we will notify the Inclusion Support Service of all reduced timetables as soon as a plan has been agreed.

Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential, the following policies are integral to this approach:

- Safeguarding
- Child Protection
- Supporting Children with medical conditions
- Admissions

- Anti-bullying
- Teaching and learning.
- Behaviour and Suspensions

Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- [Working together to improve school attendance, DfE, \(August 2024\)](#)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE \(January 2015\)](#)
- [Children missing education, DfE \(September 2016\)](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education, DfE \(September 2024\)](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children, DfE \(July 2023\)](#)

Appendices

The following pages contain appendices relevant to this policy.

Appendix 1: Example leave of absence request form

Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances

Schools are only able to authorise absence from school in exceptional circumstances. In making a request for an authorised absence from school you will need to explain why the circumstances are exceptional. Please note: There is no general right to authorised absence for a family holiday. If you take your child out of school without permission the absence will be unauthorised, and the local authority will consider legal action.

You are advised not to make any arrangements until your request has been considered.

Section A – to the headteacher, I wish to apply for

Child's name: _____ Class: _____

To be authorised as absent from school (please include dates and time):

from _____ to _____ (inclusive dates)

If your child has siblings that are also applying for a leave of absence, please enter their name and school below:

Child's name(s): _____ School(s): _____

Section B Please explain why you are applying for an authorised absence and the circumstances which make your application exceptional; and therefore, the leave cannot be taken within the normal 13 weeks holiday your child has from school. If you are requesting authorisation to attend a specific event, please confirm the date of the event and explain your travel arrangements. If you require additional space, please continue on the other side of the page.

Section C I am the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides. The information I have given on this form is correct.

Signature (parent/carer): _____ Date: _____

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have been amended (as of 1 September 2013) to prohibit the proprietor (headteacher) of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Section D – for school use only.

Tick as appropriate.

Request approved for ____ number of days from the dates and times _____

A personal discussion with you is requested. Please contact: _____

Request not approved as the circumstances are not considered to constitute an exceptional reason and/or the impact of this absence will affect your child's educational progress.

PLEASE NOTE: This leave of absence form serves as a Warning to parent/carer. Any unauthorised absence during this period may be subject to a Penalty Notice OR may result in a prosecution if two previous penalty notices have been issued in a rolling three-year period

A Penalty Notice may be issued per parent/carer, per child (i.e. if two parents have two children this may result in four Penalty Notices – two Penalty Notices per parent).

Headteacher: _____ Date: _____

Current attendance rate: _____

Continuation of section B (if required):

Appendix 2: Example reply to leave of absence request

Dear Parent's name,

RE: Absence during term time – Child Name (Child DOB)

Thank you for your application for absence in term time for Child's name. Whilst we appreciate your circumstances, The Westgate School do not approve any absences during term time unless they are due to exceptional circumstances as per the guidance from the Department of Education.

The rationale behind this decision is that the Government has provided evidence that satisfactory progress at school is highly dependent on attendance.

The Westgate School works closely with the Inclusion Support Service and if you choose to take your child out of school for the above unauthorised leave, we will notify the local authority and further action including legal action may be considered.

Please note that such a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £80 which increases to £160 if not paid within the first 21 days. Thereafter if the Penalty remains unpaid after 28 days this may result in legal action be taken against you. Parents have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

I have noted the dates that **Child Name** will be absent from The Westgate School, **Dates of leave** and the registers will be marked with the G code (unauthorised family holiday) for this period.

If you would like to discuss the matter further, please contact the school on 01962 854757

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 3: Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

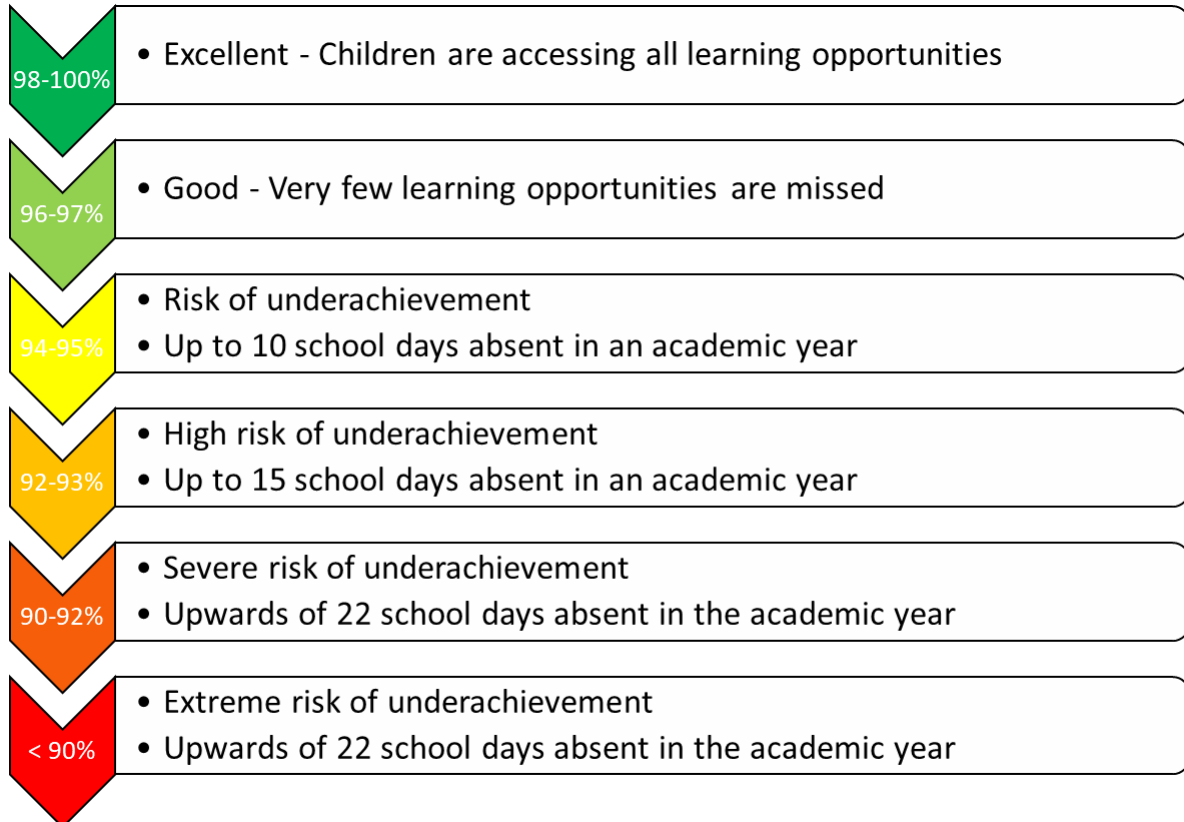
Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

We expect pupils to attend school for 100% of the academic year.

You can support your child to have excellent attendance by taking these steps:

- Ensure your child arrives on time for school every day and is ready to learn. Arriving after registration is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Pupils must be in school by 8:30am.
- If your child appears to be only slightly unwell, send them in to school. We have colleagues who will contact you if their condition deteriorates.
- Book any medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is unavoidable, please book for as late in the afternoon as possible and inform the school of appointments in advance.
- Supply a copy of the appointment card or hospital letter if your child has an appointment during school hours.

If your child becomes reluctant to go to school or you need help, please contact the school immediately; we are more likely to be able to work together to solve any problems if we act early.



‘On the day’ absences: what should I do if my child is not ‘fit’ to go into school?

On each day your child is unfit to come to school, please report this absence using Edulink or by calling the school by 9:00am.

Leave of Absence

There may be exceptional circumstances where you need to request a leave of absence for your child. Please use our ‘Leave of absence request’ form to make these types of requests. The form should be submitted in advance of the leave of absence, via contact@westgate.hants.sch.uk. You will receive a letter in response, to advise if the request has been granted or declined.

Punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive on time for school in the morning and for every lesson during the day.

The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children’s attainment. I hope we can count on your support in this matter.

Please contact us if you require any support with ensuring your child’s regular school attendance.

Appendix 4: Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Pupils

Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Pupils

Roles and responsibilities:

All members of the school community at The Westgate School have roles and responsibilities in promoting and ensuring good attendance and punctuality.

Role of the pupils:

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the education opportunities available.

All pupils will:

- Ensure that they attend school regularly and on time.
- Be aware of their current attendance record and targets.
- Be aware of the consequences of poor attendance or truancy.
- Arrive to lessons punctually.
- Not leave school without permission.
- Inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied or feel unhappy in school.

Appendix 5: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from Working Together to Improve 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 approved by the school. Schools must also record the nature of the approved educational activity.	Examples of nature of activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1) Attending taster days at college • 2) Attending courses at college • 3) Attending unregistered alternative provision arranged by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority Schools must also record the nature of the provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending courses at college • Attending unregistered alternative provision such as, home tutoring
P	Sporting activity	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity
V	Educational visit or trip	An educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff
W	Attending work experience	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by a local authority or the school as part of the pupil's education

Code	Definition	Scenario
Absent – leave of absence		
C	<p>Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances</p> <p>Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance</p>	Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	All schools can grant leaves of absence for pupils to undertake employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs
E	Excluded	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness
J1	Interview	Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
M	Medical appointment	Attending a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to
S	Study leave	Studying for a public examination. Must be used sparingly with revision opportunities in school
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	

Code	Definition	Scenario
Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	This is linked to transport not other access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	The school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Adverse weather
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	In police detention, remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention.
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	An emergency has prevented the pupil from attending. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not just the parent.

Code	Definition	Scenario
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	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	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given
U	Arrival after registration	A pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session.

Code	Definition	Scenario
Administrative Codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	To enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens.
#	Planned whole school closure	Whole school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day/use of whole school as polling station