



WESTFIELD SCHOOL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Attendance Policy

UPDATED: October 2021

WESTFIELD SCHOOL

POLICY DOCUMENT

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Rationale

Westfield School believes good attendance is crucial in helping students to fulfil their academic potential and emotional well-being.

The government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
- act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

'School Attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities', (August 2020)

Context

As a special school Westfield recognises that managing the attendance of children and young people needs to be carried out on an individual basis. Decisions taken will be based on the needs of pupils and in line with individual medical needs. The school will work in partnership with families and other professionals to make decisions about how best to support children and young people to achieve the highest possible attendance levels at school.

AIMS

- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils.
- To promote outstanding progress towards pupils' individual outcomes.
- To support pupils to have the best attendance possible (based on individual needs and circumstance)
- To support families in making sure their child has the best attendance possible

Westfield is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all students. Regular attendance is critical if students are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. Attendance of above 95% is encouraged through a variety of awards and incentives, thus achieving progress in line with predicted targets. The curriculum is planned in a progressive way,

so periods of absence prevent learners from making links between ideas, skills and concepts, as well as embedding taught skills.

Expectations of parents/carers:

- To support their child/young person to come to school daily
- To inform the school in person as soon as possible if their child will not be attending, providing a reason for their absence
- To discuss any medical needs their child has with the Health Team, school nurse and/or class team so that strategies can be setup to enable them to attend school as frequently as possible.

To engage with the school attendance procedures; including

- Whenever possible, scheduling routine medical/dental appointments during the school holidays, or after school;
- Using the official form to request all appointments attended during school time (attached, and also available on our school website) accompanied by the letter confirming the appointment. Ensure that your child attends school before and/or after the appointment wherever possible; appointments with no form completed in advance will be marked as unauthorised on the register
- Respecting the registration times of 9am and 1.15pm, and the end of the school day at 3.15pm;
- To take holidays during the 14 weeks when school is closed across the year unless there are truly exceptional circumstances: any such requests must be in advance using the official form and will be referred to governors for consideration; requests for holidays where an individual's attendance is below 96% *will not* be authorised;

Expectations of school:

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff promote full attendance at Westfield through;

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Consistent, clear communication with parents and pupils about the importance of regular, prompt, attendance.
- Training staff to meet the medical needs of individual pupils to enable them to be in school as much as possible
- Carrying out first day monitoring for pupils who are absent from school and to ask parents/carers to provide a reason for the absence
- Working with pupils and their families to improve attendance through
 - Meetings
 - Attendance targets
 - Attendance contracts
 - Parenting groups
 - Working with other professionals to support long term absence due to prolonged illness/hospital stay i.e home or blended learning tasks
- Providing parents with termly updates on their child's level of attendance
- Publishing attendance figures annually to the Local Authority and the DfE

- Students and groups with attendance of 95% or above will have their achievements recognised each week.
- Any child attending 95% or above for a full year, receives an Attendance Achievement Certificate.

The school responds to non-attendance by:

- The admin team contacts parents on the first day of an absence if no reason or notification has been received. Contact will be by telephone.
- If there is no response to the telephone call an email or text will be sent
- If there is no response to the first contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) may do a home visit. It may be necessary for the class teacher or headteacher to accompany her on this visit.
- Where a pattern of non-attendance is emerging, parents/carers will be invited to work with school staff to help resolve the difficulties

Pupils with significant health conditions may require extended periods of absence, for surgery and/ or recovery; these situations can always be explained and evidenced. In addition, many pupils attend a variety of medical appointments with different specialists due to their diagnoses. We also acknowledge the requirement for a 48-hour symptom free period following any episode of gastroenteritis, in accordance with Department of Health guidance.

- **All** absences, whether authorised or unauthorised, are recoded as absences. A list of ‘authorised’ reasons for absence is attached. If the reason provided by parents/carers does not feature on this list, eg. visiting relatives, birthdays etc, then the absence will be deemed unauthorised, even if the school has been informed;
- **Covid related absence:** Pupils testing positive for Covid are required to remain away from school in line with the relevant DfE guidance, currently 10 days. Since 16.08.21 there is no requirement for children under the age of 16, or those who have received full vaccination, to isolate if they have been in contact with a positive case, although it is advised to have a PCR to check. We are happy to answer enquiries on a case by case basis if necessary.

This policy was presented to the Children’s Families and Community Committee on 14.10.21, and subsequently adopted by the Governing Body. To be reviewed annually

Signed _____

Date _____

Contents of Attendance Register

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present;
- Late arrival before register has closed;
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

List of authorised absence attendance codes used:

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request, (including previous attendance record)

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

Code H: Holiday authorised by the school

Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Governors and Head Teacher's discretion.

Code I: Illness (**not medical or dental appointments**)

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment

Code L: Late before register closes

Code R: Religious observance

Code S: Study leave

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Code X: Covid related absence

Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

Code N: No reason given for absence

Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent

Taken from 'Department for Education; School Attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities'. August 2020

Pupil Leave Request Appointments

Date of request:	
Name:	
Date of absence:	
Reason for request: (Appointment letters must be attached)	
Time you wish to collect your child:	
Time of appointment:	
Time expected to return to school:	
Signed:	
Date:	

To be completed by the class teacher

Recorded on SIMS:	
Signature:	
Date:	

To be completed by the Head Teacher

Authorised:	Yes/ No
Signature:	
Date:	