



# Attendance Policy

In order for children to fully achieve their potential both academically and socially, it is important that they attend school regularly. Research has proven that even if children miss small amounts of time from school, it can have a significant impact on their achievements. Consequently, we strive to encourage excellent attendance of all children in school.

Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to make a positive contribution to their community.

This policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other policies related to the well-being of children including safeguarding, behaviour, friendship and support for children with medical needs.

School will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives from other agencies such as the School Nurse, Local Support Team or Family Support to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance.

School will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly. All children should be in school on time, every day that the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

## Admissions Register

School keeps an admissions register which records the date that each child joined the school and their personal details including those of their parents and of their previous school. All schools keep a record of attendance registers for at least 3 years and inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.

A pupil can be lawfully deleted from the register on the grounds described in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations where they;

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. Home educated (see below).
- Have ceased to attend the school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered.
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school.
- Are in custody for a period of time of more than 4 months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period.
- Have been permanently excluded .

## **Elective Home Education**

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child, then we will inform the Local Authority of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register and follow their procedures. Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

## **Definition of persistent absence**

Persistent absentees are defined as those children missing more than 10% or more of the typical amount of possible sessions across a given period. School monitors attendance each month. When a child's attendance is less than 90%, a letter may be sent home to remind parents of the importance of regular attendance. If this pattern continues a further letter will be sent home asking parents to attend a meeting to discuss any issues regarding attendance and how school and parents can work together to make improvements. If attendance continues to be a concern, there is the likelihood that a Local Authority Fixed Penalty notice shall be issued.

## **Staff Responsibilities**

At Westfield, all staff are involved in promoting excellent attendance. Miss Sally Boswell reviews and monitors attendance at least weekly and as part of this may call parents to recognise and celebrate improvements in attendance or to remind parents of the requirements on them to see if school can support in any way with attendance.

## **Absence Procedures**

If your child does not attend school, parents should contact the office at the earliest possibility explaining the child's absence. If no contact is made, school will contact parents to ensure the safety and well-being of the child. If no reason is given for an absence, this is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

The doors into school open at 8.40am and close at 8.50am. Any child arriving after this time should enter through the main office and will be marked as late. Registers close at 9.15am. If a child arrives in school after this time, they do not receive an attendance mark for the morning session.

If a child is late, this can impact on their social and academic achievements. Lateness is also reviewed monthly and where a child is persistently late over a period of time, a penalty notice can be issued which may result in a fine.

## **Appointments**

Medical and dental appointments should always be made outside of the school day where possible. When children have an appointment, the school office should be informed.

## **Unauthorised absence and Holiday Requests**

The Local Authority must be informed by the school of the absence of any child for a continuous period of 10 days or more without the school's permission.

Under current guidelines, schools are not permitted to authorise absence for holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents should use the school holiday form (Appendix 1) to put their request in writing and this will be considered by the Headteacher and, if necessary, the Governors. If there is any doubt the school will seek advice from the local authority. On receipt of the request, a letter will be sent to parents explaining the decision. Where children do take a holiday in term time a G code is recorded in the register. School will work alongside the local authority to take appropriate action, including fixed penalty notices - which can result in a fine, where there is concern over a child's attendance.

At Westfield, governors review attendance termly.

**The school target for attendance is 97%.**

### **Monitoring/review arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by Pam Anderson; Deputy Head with responsibility for inclusion. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

### **Links to other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Children with mental health needs who cannot attend school

Pam Anderson  
Deputy Headteacher (March 2021)