



# West Hill Primary School ATTENDANCE POLICY



## Let's shine together

Our vision is a school where everyone shines

What we do and encourage as a school family;

**Achieve** – excellence in teaching and learning which excites and inspires our children to be the best they can be.

**Happiness** – smiling, engaged and articulate children who are listened to, encouraged and given every support to maximise their own individual potential.

**Friendship** – children who are kind and caring towards each other, building lasting friendships.

**Respect** – a respect for people, each others' beliefs, our environment and all living things.

**Responsibility** – independent, creative thinkers who have the confidence to be responsible for themselves, their behaviour and for others.

**Co-operation** – working together, listening and valuing others' opinions within the school family and the wider community.

This policy was adopted by West Hill Primary School Governing Board on  
24<sup>th</sup> May 2018

Date of Review	Body responsible for review	Date of next review
24 <sup>th</sup> May 2018	FGB	Spring 2021

### STATEMENT OF SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

At West Hill Primary School, our school community has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are our pupils. This means that we have a Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy and Procedures in place which we refer to in our prospectus. All staff including our volunteers and supply staff must ensure that they are aware of our procedures. Parents and carers are welcome to read these on request.

Sometimes we may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a child's welfare. We will always ensure that our concerns about our pupils are discussed with their parents/carers first unless we have reason to believe that this is not in the child's best interests.

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## 1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We believe that children can reach their full potential only by receiving full-time education, through regular and structured attendance. We, at West Hill Primary School, expect all pupils to arrive and leave school punctually and we emphasise this to parents.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [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. School procedures**

#### **3.1 Attendance register**

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08.55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 09.00am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm

#### **3.2 Unplanned absence**

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). A telephone call is acceptable; An absence list is kept in the school office to record all phone calls regarding absences and a green slip is issued to teachers in registers. Ideally, however, when their child returns, parents should send a letter to school explaining the absence. Parents may call at the school to see the class teacher to notify their child's non-attendance. The class teacher and the School Administrator keep these records. All information is used for Class Registers. If no notification, either in the form of a phone call or letter, is received about a child's absence, the school Administrator or the Head Teacher, contacts the parent/guardian, with an automatically produced letter from the Sims Attendance System.

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

#### **3.3 Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences using a S2 absence form.

However, we encourage parents 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.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

### 3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will need to be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

All pupils who are late must be brought to the Reception area by their parent(s)/guardian(s) who will sign the late book, giving the reason for being late.

The School Administrator is responsible for collating Attendance Records in school and notifies the Head Teacher if there is any reason for concern. The Head Teacher contacts the parents if lateness or lack of attendance persists.

### 3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

### 3.6 Reporting to parents

At the end of the year, each child's attendance is analysed and is reported on School Pupil Tracker, which parents are able to access. The Sims 'Attendance' software is to be used for this purpose.

## 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Parents must complete a S2 absence request form to request any kind of absence in term time, including for appointments and holidays. When parents elect to go on holiday without authorisation, then this will be treated as unauthorised and depending on the length of time, may be reported to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a fine. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- 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
- When the school identifies pupils and families where attendance is poor, a warning letter will be issued initially followed by a meeting. The Education Welfare Officer will also be contacted.

### 4.2 Legal sanctions

- From September 2018 parents will be fined for the unauthorised absence of their child from school for holidays in term time, where the child is of compulsory school age when a child has **at least ten, half-day unauthorised absences recorded against their name within six months.**

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

## 5. Strategies for promoting attendance

### Attendance Targets

The Governing Body has a duty to set attendance targets each year, to reduce the overall absence rates (i.e. authorised and unauthorised absences combined). The annual target is based on the total absences expected in the school year, expressed as a percentage of the total possible attendances by pupils at the school.

### Newsletter

- ◆ The weekly attendance figure is published at the start of each weekly newsletter.

### Class Organisation/Lessons

- ◆ Lessons on telling the time.
- ◆ Children may design posters for attendance and punctuality to be displayed around the school.
- ◆ Writing letters.
- ◆ Class/School Council discussions on feelings, likes and dislikes about school.
- ◆ PSHE and Citizenship lessons may explore attendance
- ◆ Questionnaires to pupils and parents
- ◆ Peer group support – contacting friends who are absent.
- ◆ Positive support for those pupils who have been absent for a significant period – planned reintegration.

### Rewards

- ◆ Special Headteacher Award Certificates are presented half-termly, to those children with 100% attendance each half-term.
- ◆ Special certificates are presented to those children with full attendance during the year, in all year groups.

## 6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a monthly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

If parents are expected to call the school on the first day of sickness.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Attendance data is collected and stored, and is used for internal purposes – for example, to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

### **7.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis through the headteacher's report. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **7.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **7.3 The attendance officer**

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **7.4 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

### **7.5 Office staff**

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

## 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
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
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

<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

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