

# Attendance Policy



Westgate C.P.  
School

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| Version | Date        | Author   | Comments                      |
|---------|-------------|----------|-------------------------------|
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|         |             |          |                               |

|                          |          |
|--------------------------|----------|
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## 1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE).

We aim to achieve this through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of 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 make sure 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 is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) and [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#).

The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Maintained Schools: Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- The [Equality Act 2010](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
- [Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit](#)

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
  - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

#### **3.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The 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 penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the deputy headteacher to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
  - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance (Attendance Lead)**

The designated senior leader (also known as the Attendance Lead) is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Kidd and can be contacted via the School Office (Tel: 01284 755988 or Email: [admin@westgatecp.co.uk](mailto:admin@westgatecp.co.uk))

### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 9)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the school admin team when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Kidd and can be contacted via the School Office (Tel: 01284 755988 or Email: [admin@westgatecp.co.uk](mailto:admin@westgatecp.co.uk))

### **3.5 Class Teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis and submitting this information to the school office.

### **3.6 School Admin Staff**

The School Admin Team will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Add the correct codes to the attendance registers on a daily basis
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the headteacher (deputy headteacher), in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e., lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call or email the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence if appropriate), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school a minimum of 2 emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Mrs Kidd

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils on this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending a place other than school
- Absent
- Absent – unable to attend due to unavoidable causes

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, where 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 9am and ends at 3.30pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9am on each school day. Classroom doors open at 8.50am.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9.10am.

The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm.

## 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent 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 contacting the School Office.

Please call the school office (01284 755988 Option 1) and leave a message with the name of your child, class and the reason for the absence. You can also speak to the Office Team using Option 2. If you are unsure as to how long your child should be absent given the nature of their illness, we will be happy to discuss this with you. You can also email: [admin@westgaetcp.co.uk](mailto:admin@westgaetcp.co.uk)

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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.

## 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

If you do have a medical appointment that cannot be arranged for out of school hours, we would ask that you notify the school office as soon as possible and provide them with a copy of the appointment confirmation. This can be done in person or by email

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.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. We ask that this is at least 2 weeks in advance. Leave of Absence forms can be collected from the School Office.

Please give as much detail and provide any evidence to support your request. It is important that you explain why the absence needs to be during term time. We will be happy to discuss this with you.

See 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 absent, using the appropriate code

If a pupil is persistently late, a reminder letter will be sent to parents. If this does not improve, a meeting will be called between parents and the Attendance Lead. If the pupil continues to arrive late, a referral may be made to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

## 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:

- Call the pupil's parent on 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, we will continue to make attempts during the day.

If the child is absent the following day and the school have still had no contact from the parent, then staff will continue to attempt contact and may complete a 'door knock' to ascertain the child is safe.

If this is unsuccessful and we still cannot reach parents, then school may contact the police to complete a Welfare Check.

*\*If a child is gaining support from Child and Young People's Services or is known to the DSL as being at possible risk of harm, a door knock may occur on the first day of absence and relevant professionals informed.*

- 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(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

See Section 7 for next steps, where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with.

## 4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see the definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels.

If a child's attendance falls below 96% then a reminder letter will be sent out to parents.

Attendance will be given at Parent's Evenings and on the annual school report.

## 5. Authorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview for admission to another educational institution

- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- 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 events which are unlikely to reoccur.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation an exceptional circumstance.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the School Office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

The headteacher/school may discuss the leave of absence request with other education settings and/or the Local Authority to determine any exceptional circumstances.

## 5.2 Other reasons for authorised absence

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health 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 parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart for religious observance
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – a pupil is a mobile child if their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. In these circumstances a pupil will be considered as a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory school age and have no fixed abode and whose parent is in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

## 5.3 Absences from the school site (which are not classified as absences)

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. These are not classified as absences. Reasons include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We want our pupils to succeed and develop their skills. To do this, pupils need to avoid missing lessons and days of school as much as possible. As a school, we want to recognise high attendance and not just penalise pupils for poor attendance.

## 7. Supporting pupils with poor attendance

Our school will make use of the full range of support and potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

### 7.1 Notice to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

A notice to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

It will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued, or prosecution considered, if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

### 7.2 Penalty notices

The headteacher (or a deputy headteacher, authorised by the headteacher), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, we will check with the local authority before doing so, and send the local authority a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

## 8. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child.

If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who live with long-term medical conditions, who have special educational needs and disabilities, or have other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils; however we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced.

We will discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support advice from external partners, where appropriate.

The Attendance Lead or SENDCo will organise a meeting with parents and develop a programme of relevant support to allow the child to attend school as much as possible. This programme could include:

- Part Time Timetable (but only with the full agreement of the parent and re-visited every second week)
- Access to weekly ELSA.
- Reward system for the child when they attend school.
- Late arrival or early pick up from school.
- Access to the school grounds via more accessible means.

- Referral to outside agencies to gain extra support.
- Access to short term alternative provision

## **9. Attendance monitoring**

### **9.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

### **9.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **9.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 9.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

- 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, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

#### **9.4 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.

Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 7, above)
- Hold termly meetings with the Education Welfare Office (EWO) to discuss all children with persistent absence data
- Send up to 3 letters to parents detailing falling absence or absence below 96%, offering meetings with parents to develop a plan to increase attendance. If a plan is unsuccessful, a referral will be made to the EWO.

#### **10. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Mrs Kidd (Headteacher / Attendance Lead).

At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## **11. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- SEND Policy
- EYFS Policy
- Data Protection and Information Management 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>Attending a place other than the school</b> |   |  |
| K  | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority                       | Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority |
| V  | Attending an educational visit or trip  | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school  |
| P  | Participating in a sporting activity  | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school  |
| W  | Attending work experience   | Pupil is on an approved work experience placement  |
| B  | Attending any other approved educational activity                                   | Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience                     |
| D  | Dual registered   | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered   |
| <b>Absent – leave of absence</b>               |   |  |
| C1   | Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad | Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school   |
| M  | Medical/dental appointment  | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment  |
| J1   | Interview   | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment   |
| S  | Study leave   | Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination  |

| Code   | Definition                                  | Scenario   |
|--|---|--|
| X  | Not required to be in school                | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend   |
| C2   | Part-time timetable                         | Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable   |
| C  | Exceptional circumstances                   | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances   |
| <b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>                             |   |  |
| T  | Parent travelling for occupational purposes | Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes                              |
| R  | Religious observance                        | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance  |
| I  | Illness (not medical or dental appointment) | Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)   |
| E  | Suspended or excluded                       | Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made  |
| <b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b> |   |  |
| Q  | Lack of access arrangements                 | Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school         |
| Y1   | Transport not available                     | Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available |
| Y2   | Widespread disruption to travel             | Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency                |
| Y3   | Part of school premises closed              | Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open                    |
| Y4   | Whole school site unexpectedly closed       | Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)  |
| Y5   | Criminal justice detention                  | Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> </ul>                             |

| Code                                 | Definition                                  | Scenario  |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
|                                      |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul> |
| Y6                                   | Public health guidance or law               | Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law   |
| Y7                                   | Any other unavoidable cause                 | To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes   |
| <b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b> |   |   |
| G                                    | Holiday not granted by the school           | Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school  |
| N                                    | Reason for absence not yet established      | Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes  |
| O                                    | Absent in other or unknown circumstances    | No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence |
| U                                    | Arrived in school after registration closed | Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session   |
| <b>Administrative codes</b>          |   |   |
| Z                                    | Prospective pupil not on admission register | Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered   |
| #                                    | Planned whole-school closure                | Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays  |

## Appendix 2: Attendance Letters

### Stage 1 Attendance Letter

Dear Parent/ Carer,

I am writing to you as XXX's attendance is lower than the school target of 96%. To date, XXX has been absent for XX days this academic year. This may include authorised absences and/or absences you have informed us about.

There is nothing that we need from you at this stage other than to support your child with any unnecessary future absence.

We will be checking attendance again in two weeks' time. If attendance has improved, we will acknowledge this and celebrate with you.

For children that are very unwell, being absent from school is the right thing to do. However, medical advice is clear that children with mild illness will often be well enough to attend school - for example if they have a cough, or cold, without a temperature. NHS guidance to support decision making can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact me via the School Office (01284 755988).

Thank you for your ongoing support.

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### Stage 2 Attendance Letter

Dear Parent / Carer,

Since we wrote to you on XXX and XXX's attendance has not improved. Their attendance now stands at XX% and equates to XXX days in total. This may include authorised absences and/or absences you have informed us about. The school expects attendance to be 96% or above, based on Government targets.

We will continue monitoring XXX's attendance. If attendance does not improve, you will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss general attendance, any barriers to attendance and how we can work together to help improve attendance.

It is important that should your child have further absences, suitable medical evidence is provided. This could include a GP note, proof of appointment and/or labelled medication. Absences will only be authorised once suitable medical evidence is provided.

If you need support and advice or your child is experiencing difficulties at school, please contact us so that we can offer you further support.

### **Stage 3 Attendance Letter**

Dear Parent/Carer,

We have written to you regarding XXX's attendance, most recently on XXX. Unfortunately, their attendance has not improved and is now at XXX%. This is a total of XXX days and is below the school and Government target of 96%.

As such, we now ask that you attend a meeting at school to discuss the reasons for your child's decreasing attendance and how we can work together to improve their attendance levels at school. We understand that there may be valid reasons for low attendance and that these absences may have been authorised, and this will be reviewed at the meeting. Please contact the School Office on 01284 755988 to arrange an attendance meeting.

Please be aware that if XXX's attendance fails to improve, or you fail to arrange and/or attend a meeting, we may have to refer this to our Education Welfare Officer, who will contact you to discuss your child's school attendance.

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### **Stage 3 Attendance Letter (end of academic year)**

Dear Parent/Carer,

You have received two letters regarding XXX's attendance. Unfortunately, the attendance has not improved and is now at XXX%. This is a total of XXX days and is below the school and Government target of 96%.

Your child's attendance is of concern and we will be monitoring it closely from the start of the new academic year. Please be aware that if attendance continues to be of concern, we will have to refer the matter to our Education Welfare Officer, who may contact you to discuss your child's school attendance.

Should you require any further information or wish to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact me via the School Office on 01284 755988.

## Appendix 3: 'Late' Letters

### Stage 1 Late Letter

Dear Parents/ Carers

Following routine monitoring of all student's punctuality, we can see that XXX has arrived late for school on more than four occasions, during the previous month.

When pupils are late for school, they miss valuable learning time and usually, a particular subject is affected, which can then result in the child falling behind. Arriving late can be disruptive to other students but can also be embarrassing for the child arriving late.

There's nothing that we need from you at this stage other than to avoid unnecessary late arrivals and the impact on your child.

We'll be checking attendance again in two weeks' time. If there is an improvement in punctuality, we hope to acknowledge this and celebrate with you.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact me via the School Office (01284 755988).

---

### Stage 2 Late Letter

Dear Parents/ Carers

Since we last wrote to you on XXX, XXX has continued to arrive late on a number of occasions. This equates to a total of XXX minutes in XXX time period.

When pupils are late for school, they miss valuable learning time and usually a particular subject is affected, which can then result in the child falling behind. Arriving late can be disruptive to other students but can also be embarrassing for the child arriving late.

Please be aware that arrival after the close of the class register at 9.10am is recorded as an unauthorised absence. This is an offence in law, which could result in enforcement proceedings if arriving late becomes a regular occurrence.

If you are experiencing any difficulty ensuring your child arrive at school on time, please contact the School Office on 01284 755988 to arrange a meeting to discuss and look for ways to resolve the difficulties.

### **Stage 3 Late Letter**

Dear Parent/Carer,

We have now written to you on two occasions regarding XXX's punctuality. Unfortunately, they have continued to arrive late for school. This equates to a total of XXX minutes over XXXX time period.

Your child's punctuality is of concern. As such, we now ask that you attend a meeting at school to discuss the reasons for your child's late arrival at school. We understand that there may be valid reasons and this will be discussed at the meeting. Please contact the School Office on 01284 755988 to arrange an attendance meeting.

If punctuality fails to improve or you fail to attend the meeting, we may refer the matter to our Education Welfare Officer, who may contact you to discuss this further.

## Appendix 4: Leave of Absence Request Form



### LEAVE OF ABSENCE APPLICATION FORM

Parents/carers applying for their child to have leave from school **in exceptional circumstances** should complete this form and return it to school for authorisation **before** the planned leave of absence **and at least 2 weeks beforehand**.

Please note that in cases where an application is not made beforehand, leave of absence will be considered **unauthorised**.

As per the school Absence Policy, approved by the Governors, absence during term time will not routinely be sanctioned **unless in exceptional circumstances**.

The Government states that parents should not take their children on holidays in term time and there is no legal right to do so.

Please note that the case will be referred to the Suffolk Attendance Service if:

- if the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway
- the unauthorised absence is at least 4 days or more in length

In such circumstances, the Attendance Service may issue a Penalty Notice. This penalty is **£60 per parent, per child** if paid within 21 days and must be paid in full. This penalty doubles to £120 after 21 days if unpaid.

If payment is not made in full within 28 days of issue, the Local Authority may begin legal proceedings. This may lead to a fine to £1,000.

All absences, authorised & unauthorised, are transferable between schools and remain on a pupil's record.

To apply for a leave of absence, please complete the form on the reverse of this sheet.

To discuss your planned leave of absence or for help in completing the form, please contact the School Office (Tel: 01284 755988 / Email: [admin@westgatecp.co.uk](mailto:admin@westgatecp.co.uk))

Please complete the form  
on the reverse of this sheet



**WESTGATE CP SCHOOL  
LEAVE OF ABSENCE APPLICATION FORM**



|   |  |                   |                                    |                             |  |
|---|--|-------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Name of pupil   |  |                   |                                    |                             |  |
| Class   |  |                   |                                    |                             |  |
| Date of birth   |  |                   |                                    |                             |  |
| Name of Parent or Carer   |  |                   |                                    |                             |  |
| Date requested from   |  | Date requested to |                                    | Total number of school days |  |
| Name of siblings also taking leave of absence                         |  |                   | Name of school if not Westgate     |                             |  |
| Reason for requesting a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances |  |                   |                                    |                             |  |
| Parent's/Carer's signature  |  |                   |                                    | Date                        |  |
| (For office use only)   |  |                   | Agreed - special circumstances [ ] |                             |  |
| Current Attendance (%):   |  |                   | Not Authorised [ ]                 |                             |  |
| Total sessions unauthorised pupil absence this year:                  |  |                   | Signature of Headteacher:          |                             |  |
| Total sessions (i.e. half days) pupil absence this year:              |  |                   | Date:                              |                             |  |
| Reason for decision:  |  |                   |                                    |                             |  |

## Appendix 5: School Penalty Notice for School Attendance

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices issued by DfE, the following changes came into force for School Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

### National Threshold

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence.

The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

**Please note:** 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.

### First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:  
£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.  
Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.



### Second Offence (within 3 years)

The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:  
£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.



### Per Parent\*, Per Child

A School Penalty Notice is issued to each parent\*, for each child that was absent.  
For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate penalty notices.

### \*Parent

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines "parent" as:

- All natural (biological) parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

### Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case could be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in Criminal records and fines of up to £2,500. Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court may show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.


# Appendix 6: Attendance and Punctuality Posters

## Absence Procedures

### Child is unwell

Email or telephone the School Office



- Opt 1 to leave a message
- Opt 2 for the Office Team



### Late arrival

Telephone the School Office

- Give E.T.A.
- Lunch arrangements


admin@westgatecp.co.uk

01284 755 988

### Appointments

By Email or in-person:


- Let us know the time of arrival or pick-up
- Provide appointment confirmation
- What the child's lunch arrangements are



### Leave of absence

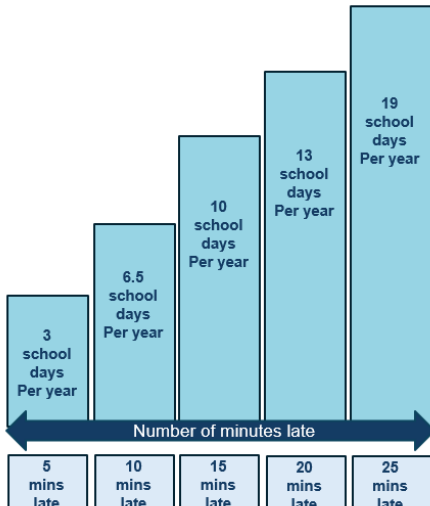
Complete a leave of absence form (available from The School Office)

- At least 2 weeks notice
- Provide evidence/reason
- Why term time?



## Punctuality


Frequently being late means you miss out on school days!



| Number of minutes late |                          |                         |                         |                         |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 5 mins late            | 10 mins late             | 15 mins late            | 20 mins late            | 25 mins late            |
| 3 school days Per year | 6.5 school days Per year | 10 school days Per year | 13 school days Per year | 19 school days Per year |

## ATTENDANCE MATTERS!

**85% or less attendance is over half a term of school that is missed!**



| Absence         | Days in school     | Attendance % | Impact                      |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| 0 days absence  | 190 days in school | 100%         | Best chance of success      |
| 10 days absence | 180 days in school | 95%          | Less change of success      |
| 19 days absence | 171 days in school | 90%          |                             |
| 29 days absence | 161 days in school | 85%          |                             |
| 38 days absence | 152 days in school | 80%          | Serious impact on education |
| 47 days absence | 143 days in school | 75%          |                             |

**365 Days in a Year**  
190 School Days  
175 Non School Days

If attendance is 90% each year, that is half a school year over a 5 year period!

A 2 week holiday in term time means a child can have a max of 94.7% attendance

## **Appendix 7: Further information**

[Working together to improve school attendance](#)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e8ae343649a2001aed63aa/Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance applies from 19 August 2024 .pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e8ae343649a2001aed63aa/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

[The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/1000/contents/made)

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/anti-social-behaviour-act-2003-penalty-notice-code-of-conduct.pdf>

[DfE external document template \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/external-document-template)