



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	March 2018	Next scheduled review	October 2024
Governor approved	May 2024	Key person/people	DHTS
Model Policy	HCC (awaiting update)	Model localised	No (taken from DfE document February 24)
Pupil leadership team review	N/A		

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY (including register of admissions and attendance)

This policy outlines the responsibilities of the School and the responsibilities of parents/carers in ensuring that a pupil's attendance and punctuality is as high as possible and not a cause for concern. There is a very strong correlation, nationally and at The Westgate School, between good attendance and positive outcomes in Year 6 and Year 11. The School maintains a live register of pupil on roll in the School and daily attendance using its Management Information System.

Promoting and supporting strong attendance is the responsibility of all colleagues and parents/carers through a safe and welcoming environment alongside the awareness that absence is a potential safeguarding risk. 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.

Parents/Carers share joint responsibility with the School for ensuring that their child maintains strong attendance at School. Children benefit most when parents/carers work in constructive partnership with the School, supporting and utilising strategies to support strong attendance.

Objectives

Good attendance in School means that children and pupils have access to a range of opportunities, educational and social. In supporting this principle, the School will:

1. Maintain a whole School culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
2. Ensure the safeguarding of all pupils through support with strong attendance and good punctuality. Where there are concerns about a pupil's welfare, action will be taken in line with the School's Safeguarding Policy.
3. Promote good attendance and address persistent or frequent absence.
4. Ensure every child has opportunity to access full-time education in School through reasonable adjustments where needed.
5. Address patterns of absence and promote good punctuality.
6. Evaluate the attendance of key groups and act proactively to address any concerns.

Nationally, persistent absenteeism is defined as 90% and below. At The Westgate School, 93% is the benchmark for the School to address and support with low attendance as early as possible.

Pupils (when they are old enough to understand) are expected to:

1. Attend School every day.
2. Arrive at School on time.
3. Be prepared for the day and ready to learn.
4. Speak to a trusted adult if they feel there is a problem that may affect their attendance and/or punctuality.

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

1. Support the School with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year as per parental legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and attending on time.
2. Parents/Carers must ensure any absence is clearly accounted for.
3. Parents/Carers must inform the School on the first day of absence and every subsequent day, the most efficient method is by registering via EduLink, where EduLink is unavailable please telephone the School by 9.00am.
4. Providing full contact details and emergency contact details for at least two adults in case of emergencies. Update the School of any changes to these.
5. Only request an absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance by completing an Absence Request Form.
6. Not booking holidays in term time.
7. Avoid taking their child out of School for non-urgent medical or dental appointments. (these absences still have a negative impact on children's attendance record).
8. Working in partnership with the School to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance.
9. Parents and Carers should contact the child's Class Teacher (Primary Phase) or tutor (Secondary Phase) immediately and openly to discuss anything that affects attendance at School.
10. If more detailed support on attendance is required, parents and carers should contact the Primary Phase Deputy, Mrs C. Farrell or in the Secondary Phase the Year Leader.
11. Proactively engage with support offered.
12. Contact the School if their child is leaving, stating new address, contact number and education provider.

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.

Recording attendance

The School maintains a live register of pupils' admission to School and daily attendance using Sims. In the Primary Phase a register will be taken at the start of the School day and at the start of the afternoon session. In the Secondary Phase a register is taken at the start of all lesson, including the tutor session. The School will ensure legal compliance with attendance regulations by keeping electronic attendance records.

Punctuality

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

- 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 Primary Phase the School ends at 3:20pm. 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.
- 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.

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.

Leave of absence in term time

Parents/carers must seek permission from the Headteacher in order to take their child out of school during term time. To do this please complete and return the form that can be found here - [Authorised Absence Request \(westgate.hants.sch.uk\)](http://westgate.hants.sch.uk) Any authorised absences from school will be informed partly by the pupil's attendance record.

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.

Parents/carers should be aware that an unauthorised leave of absence of 5 days (10 sessions) or more over a rolling period of 10 weeks will result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice which will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced if paid within 21 days. If, within a rolling 3-year period a second Penalty Notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, this will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

Information for parents and carers regarding Penalty Notices can be found here – [code-of-conduct-issuing-penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absence-from-schools.pdf \(hants.gov.uk\)](http://code-of-conduct-issuing-penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absence-from-schools.pdf)

Only the School can authorise an absence. Only the Headteacher can grant leave of absence. Where no explanation has been given, or if it is not deemed to be valid, the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

Formal and legal interventions

The Westgate School and the Local Authority will work in partnership with families to seek to improve a child's attendance. Where this is unsuccessful, or where parents/carers do not engage with support, then more formal actions may be taken.

Attendance contracts – a formal written agreement between the parent and either the School or the Local Authority to address irregular attendance. An attendance contract is not legally binding and is not a punitive tool, its aim is to provide support and an alternative to prosecution. Parents/carers cannot be compelled to enter into an attendance contract, and one cannot be agreed in the parents/carers absence.

If an attendance contract or other interventions are not successful in improving a pupil's attendance, or these are not deemed to be appropriate, the Local Authority has the option to take an alternative course of action (such as a different legal intervention) this may include:

- Penalty Notices (PN)
- Education Supervision Orders (ESO)
- Attendance prosecutions
- Parenting orders

The School does not participate in flexi school arrangements or provide online learning – other than through the Return to Learn programme (including that which is externally commissioned). As referrals to Inclusion Support Services for further support.

Pupils returning after a period of absence

Pupils who have had a period of time away from School should receive appropriate support on their return should they need it. This will be to build confidence and bridge gaps in their learning. These plans will be discussed and formalised with both parents/carers and pupils (where they are old enough to understand). These plans may include: a time limited adjustment to their timetable, additional 1:1 support from tutor/class teacher or following the Return to Learn programme.

Appendix A – Breakdown of attendance codes

Please refer to 'Working together to improve School attendance - [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) – page 76 onwards for full definition of codes.

Code	Full name	Description
The pupil is recorded as present.		
/ or \	Present at the school am or pm	Present in school at time of registration.
L	Late arrival before register has closed	The pupil was absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed.
The pupil is attending a place other than the School.		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	The pupil is attending a place, other than the School or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 (exceptional provision of education), section 42(2), or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 (special educational provision off site).
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other School at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff.
P	Participating in a sporting activity	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity.
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.
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience.
D	Dual registered at another school	This code is used to indicate that the pupil is absent with leave to attend the other School at which they are registered.
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	See Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk) for further details.
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	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.
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance	All Schools are able to grant a leave of absence at their discretion. A leave of absence should not, and from School maintained by a local authority or a special School not maintained by a local

		authority, must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances.
M	Attending a medical or dental appointment	Schools should encourage parents/carers to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, they should get the School's agreement in advance and the pupil should only be out of School for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.
J1	Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Schools can grant a leave of absence to enable the pupil to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution.
S	Studying for a public examination	Schools can grant a leave of absence for a pupil to study for a public examination.
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Schools can grant a leave of absence for a pupil not of compulsory school age to attend School part-time.
Absent – other authorised reasons		
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. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.
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 (not the parents/carers themselves).
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related).
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register, and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education.
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	The pupil is unable to attend the School because a local authority has a duty set out in regulation 10(12) or (13) to make access arrangements to enable the pupil's attendance at School and have failed to do so.
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	The pupil is unable to attend because the School is not within walking distance of their 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	The pupil is unable to attend the School because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency.

Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the School premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the School considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those part of the premises that remain in use.
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Where a School was planned to be open for a session, but the School is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather), the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no School session.
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are: 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	The pupil's travel to or attendance at the School would be: contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care or prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	An unavoidable cause, that is not covered by one of the other 'unable to attend' codes detailed above, is preventing the pupil from attending the School.
Absent - unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	The School has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday.
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence.
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Where no reason for absence is established or the School is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised.
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session.
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 closures that are known and planned in advance

Appendix B - Further guidance and supporting documents for parents/carers and schools

- a) HCC Attendance and Punctuality guidance for parents/carers: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/behaviour-attendance-parents>
- b) Code of conduct – issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence from Schools: <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/code-of-conduct-issuing-penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absence-from-schools.pdf>
- c) Effective practice document for School attendance procedures and admissions for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children: <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-Section6.pdf>
- d) DfE attendance guidance and documents: [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101211/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance-applies-from-19-august-2024.pdf)
- e) HCC guidance on elective home education: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/educationinclusion/service/electivehomeeducation>

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.