



Attendance Policy

Also, refer to
Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
Children Missing in Education Policy

Safeguarding Statement

*West Heath Primary will continuously strive to ensure that everyone in our school is treated with respect and dignity. Each person in our school will be given a fair and equal opportunity to develop their full potential with positive regard to gender, ethnicity, cultural and religious background, sexuality or disability. West Heath Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. Please also refer to the
No Platform, Visiting Speaker Policy.*

Date of review	September 2022
Date of next review	September 2024

Attendance Policy

Audience

This policy is to be read by all parents and carers to ensure that attendance is given a high priority.

Aims

All children of compulsory school age have a right to full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any particular need they may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child to make the most of the educational opportunities available to them.

Every child that attends West Heath Primary School is expected to have excellent attendance throughout the year. We understand that everyone gets sick from time to time, but minor coughs, colds or aches and pains should not stop a child from coming to school!

To achieve this aim, we will work with parents and children, offering support in school and through support services where necessary. Where attendance is a concern for individual children, they will be set personal targets.

School attendance is monitored daily to ensure Safeguarding for all children. The school will investigate all absences and make referrals to Children's Advice Support Service (CASS) and the Missing Child Team if we have concerns about the welfare and location of any pupils at this school.

Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

- Every staff member in the school is responsible for ensuring that they monitor the attendance and punctuality of all children.
- The Inclusion Team and school nursing team work to improve children's attendance; this includes the Family Support Worker and the SENCO.
- Parents have a legal duty to send their children to school every day that school is open, and the school has a legal obligation to monitor and report the attendance of all children. Following Local Authority policy, leave of absence in term time is only granted in exceptional circumstances. Each case is reviewed by the Head teacher on its merits, and records of leave are kept for individual children.
- It is school policy that no holiday or extended holiday absence is authorised under any circumstances.
- We believe that a partnership approach to attendance is vital; senior management, governors and the inclusion team will work with parents, pupils, and support services where necessary, to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils.

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Procedure

The school day starts at 8.50am the register **MUST** not be completed until 8.55am. The register will stay open until 9.20am if a child arrives to school between 8.50am and 9.20am they will be issued a late mark. If a child arrives after 9.20am they will be issued a **U** mark which is counted as an unauthorised absence mark.

It is the class teacher's legal responsibility to ensure that the register, via ePortal, is completed accurately at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.

Latecomers

If children arrive late to school, a member of the office team will record their name. A ping is then sent to parents informing them that their child will receive a strike in their Passport (refer to the passport policy)

Monitoring Absence

Where a child is absent due to illness, parents/carers should inform the school by telephone before the start of the school day

Day 1 and 2

If the school has not been notified of a child's absence the school office will send a message to the parents using the PING messaging system. The parents will be asked to inform the school of why their child is not in school.

If a child is on the vulnerable children's list, a phone call home will be also made and a home visit will be carried out if the need arises.

Day 3 and 4

Phone calls will be made to all contacts on the child's contact form, if the school is still unable to make contact and parents have not contacted the school, a home visit will be carried out.

Day 5

If a child is not in school and no contact has been made the school will contact CASS and Children Missing in Education Team for advice and to raise concerns. Contact to the Children Missing in Education Team must take place within the first five days of no contact being made by parents.

The school office **must** establish a reason for every absence. No absence should be left on the system as an 'N' (no reason given) code. If a reason is not established the office staff should liaise with the family support worker who will investigate further.

Parental illness is NOT an excuse for children being absent from school. Children must attend school every day unless they are ill.

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Reasonable Enquires for Absent Children

The school has a right to make all reasonable investigations to locate a pupil and their whereabouts if they are absent from school. This includes where parents have informed us of their intent to remove their child/children for a set number of days.

- Check with all members of staff who the pupil(s) may have had contact with.
- Check with the pupil(s) friends, siblings and known relatives at this school or other schools.
- Make telephone calls to any numbers held or identified.
- Send a letter to the last known address and record the outcome.
- Undertake home visits and record the outcome.
- The school will share this information with the Children Missing Education (CME) Team before deletion from role so that the local authority has the opportunity to make its own reasonable inquiries under the regulations before deletion takes place.

For further information and guidance please refer to:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

Medical/Dental Routine Appointments

Where appropriate routine dental/medical appointments need to be booked outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, an official appointment slip showing the date and time of the appointment should be shown to the school office before the day of the appointment.

Complex Medical Issues

In line with the Equality Duty, pupils who have complex medical needs requiring repeated hospitalization and or appointments, will be viewed differently as this is not their fault that they cannot attend school on those days. This does not apply to general illness or general medical appointments.

Emergency Absence for Family Reasons

We understand that sick relatives (especially abroad) are a worry and you may wish to take a child to visit them, but this is regarded as a holiday in the eyes of the policy and will be treated in the same way.

Religious Observance

Children are permitted to have an authorized absence in the instance of a religious festival or observance that is a **compulsory part of their faith**. This includes 1 day for Eid ul Fitr and Eid ul Adha (Islam), 1 day for Diwali (Sikh and Hindu), Rosh Hashanah, Passover and Shavuot (Judaism). Please bear in mind that not all religious festivals and ceremonies are compulsory and those the local Authority does not regard such will not be authorised.

Holidays in Term Time

Holidays during term time are **NOT** authorized at West Heath Primary School. Whilst we appreciate the advantages of travel to broaden children's understanding of the world, we believe that the 175 days off school per year gives the children plenty of time to enjoy travel opportunities.

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If a parent insists on taking their child on holiday during term time, it will be recorded in the register as a G code (unauthorized absence).

From 1st September 2013, amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 made clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If your child requires leave in term time, please complete a leave in term time application form (Appendix 1)

Leave in Term Time (Penalty Notice) Schools are responsible for monitoring their pupils' attendance and, where appropriate, the Local Authority has a duty to prosecute parents in the Magistrates Court for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to a prosecution. It requires the parent(s) to pay a fixed amount as a fine for their child's irregular attendance to avoid a court appearance. The Leave in Term Time process (Penalty Notice) was developed to work in conjunction with Fast track prosecution on Attendance, in order to reduce the unauthorised leave taken by pupils in term time.

Exceptional Circumstances

The head teacher may, on rare occasions, make a judgement that there are genuine and exceptional circumstances pertaining to an application to take a pupil out of school during term time. There is no formal list of exceptional circumstances, but examples could include;

- Death of a parent/carer or sibling of a pupil
- Life threatening or critical illness of a parent/carer or sibling of a pupil
- Parent/carer recuperation from critical illness or surgery
- Leave for armed forces personnel who are prevented by operational duties to take their leave at any other time.

All applications for holiday/extended leave will be assessed in terms of safeguarding risks. This particularly includes the risk of FGM (female genital mutilation); being exposed to radicalisation or extremism or travelling to places of high risk (see The Prevent Strategy). Any applications considered high risk would be referred to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

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ATTENDANCE CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced and partial enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll/off roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

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Safeguarding

If a child's attendance falls below 95% or a pattern of absence gives the school concern; for example, three or more separate occasions of illness; a letter will be sent home to the parent/carer requesting a meeting with the family support worker. Where further ongoing absences occur and a lack of engagement from parents is evident, this may lead to a referral being made to the Local Authority for a fast track prosecution.

Fast Track Prosecution

It is the parent's legal responsibility to ensure that their children receive appropriate education. Failing to send your child to school regularly, without good reason, is a criminal offence.

Absence can only be authorised by the **head teacher**, within the boundaries set by the Education Act 1996.

Issuing penalty notices: Each parent receives a penalty notice for a child who has unauthorised absence. The penalty is £60 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made. If there are, two parents and two children the total penalties could be up to £480. Failure to pay may result in prosecution.

Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence: The Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) – states that magistrates can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, and add costs and impose Parenting Orders.

Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence: The Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) – states that magistrates can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, impose Parenting Orders and/or impose a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Monitoring of attendance

The family support worker will receive a daily attendance report from the school office. This will show which children are absent and which children are late.

When a child has attendance below 90% they are at risk of 'Persistent Absence' which is a sign of parental neglect. Children with such low attendance are at risk of academic underachievement.

In the first instance, a general attendance letter (Green) expressing concern is sent when a pupil's attendance falls below 90%. We request that written medical evidence be provided for any further periods of illness.

When attendance fails to improve to above 90%, a second letter (Orange) is sent inviting parents to a meeting. At the meeting reasons for absence will be discussed, and support and guidance in order to improve their child's attendance will be offered.

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If attendance still doesn't improve the pupils will be placed immediately on an Attendance Action Plan (Red).

- Home visit made by a member of the Pastoral Team.
- Pupils/parents placed on Fast track process resulting in legal actions.
- Early help assessment completed to identify what support can be offered to the family. This could include a referral being made to outside agencies such as family support and or Children's Services.

Attendance initiatives

At West Heath Primary School, children are awarded for attending school.

At the end of each term, children with 100% attendance will receive an award. Parents will be invited into school to watch their children receive their award and a raffle ticket. At the end of the year, there will be an annual raffle with a large prize. Any child who has had a raffle ticket issued is eligible to win.

- One term - bronze certificate and badge, parents invited, raffle ticket issued for end of year
- Two terms - silver certificate and badge, parents invited, raffle ticket issued for end of year
- Three terms - gold certificate and medal, parents invited, raffle ticket issued for end of year

We understand some circumstances prevent children from achieving 100% attendance, but they only have a few days off, achieving 98/99% attendance. This is still a fantastic achievement and will be recognised by the parents receiving a postcard home.

There will also be some exceptional circumstances where attendance will be recognised. These pupils will be identified and approved by the head teacher.

Every week the class with the best attendance will receive a certificate on the class board. A PING will also be sent to the parents. The class with the best attendance at the end of the year will win a trip.

Taking children off roll

No child will be taken off roll until the school is satisfied that they are safe and accounted for. This will mean that we have confirmation of them starting a new school or educational establishment.

Where it is not possible to verify where a child is, children missing in education at the local authority will be informed and a child will only be taken off roll once they give authorisation.

Where a parent has elected to home school their child, the local authority home schooling team will be notified, and they child will be taken off roll.

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Emergency school closure

In the event of SEVERE weather conditions, you should assume that school is OPEN unless there is an announcement, on the radio, to say that West Heath Primary School is closed. The decision to close will be also communicated to parents via text message and will be posted on the school website.

The Chief Education Officer will announce any central decision to close all Birmingham LEA schools.

In the event of severe weather, listen to Heart FM (100.7FM), Free radio (96.4FM), or Radio WM (95.6FM) alternatively log on to the radio websites.

Heart FM www.heart.co.uk/westmids

Free radio www.freeradio.co.uk

Radio WM www.bbc.co.uk/wm

Monitoring of this policy:

The Head teacher will report attendance figures to the Governing Body at every full Governing Body meeting, this will include persistent absence and unauthorized absence. It will also include the percentage attendance for children in receipt of free school meals, special educational needs and any variations in the percentage of boys and girls.

The Policy will be reviewed biannually by the leadership team.

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Appendix 1

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES – PUPIL TERM TIME LEAVE REQUEST

Pupil's Name D.O.B Form

I request permission for the above named pupil(s) to be granted leave during the school term.

Reason for request

.....
.....
.....

Dates of Absence

From To No of school days

- I/We understand that if leave is agreed:
- if travelling abroad, I / we will supply a copy of the return travel documentation.
- I / we will supply the name and phone number of a contact person whilst abroad.
- if I / we do not return at the agreed time; I / we am / are aware that I / we may be issued with a penalty notice. If I do not pay the fine, I / we could then be required to attend Court; this could result in a fine of up to £1000 per child and having a criminal record.
- In exceptional circumstances, penalty notices may not be issued and cases may be taken straight to Court.
- He/she may be removed from the school register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Parent/Carer Name	Parent/Carer Name
DOB	DOB
Address	Address
Signature	Signature
Date	Date

Request **agreed / denied** Signed Head Teacher Dated