



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 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.

Owner	Michelle Hooper
Date of review	September 2019
Date of next review	September 2021

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Audience

This policy is to be read by all parents and carers in order 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 special 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 97% attendance or above 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 individual targets.

School attendance is monitored to ensure that school is not alerted to Safeguarding and Child Protection issue. The school will investigate all absences and will 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 member of staff in the school is responsible for ensuring they monitor attendance and punctuality of all children.
- The Inclusion Team and school nursing team specifically works to improve children's attendance; this includes the Family Support Worker, the Learning Mentor, 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 duty to monitor and report the attendance of all children. In accordance with LA 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

Morning session

The school day starts at 8.50am, register **MUST** not be completed until 8.50am they should be sent to the school office by 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.

Afternoon session

The afternoon registers **MUST** be sent to the school office no later than;

12.20 For EYFS.

12.35 For Years 1 & 2.

12.50 For Years 5 & 6.

13.05 For Years 3 & 4.

It is the class teacher's legal responsibility to ensure that the register, via ePortal, is completed accurately at all times at the start of the morning and afternoon session so that an accurate record of attendance is available and also for Safeguarding purposes.

Latecomers

If children arrive late to school, a member of the pastoral team will record their name. If the child's name is recorded three times in the same week, the parents will receive a phone call from a member of the pastoral team. If the same child is late again the following week, a letter of concern will be sent to the parents inviting them to a meeting.

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. Where no contact is made, the school office will make contact with parent/carers to find out why their child is absent from school. If contact cannot be made, then it may be considered appropriate for a home visit to be carried out by school staff.

Day 1

If school have not been notified of a child's absence the school office will send a message to the parents using 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 2

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

Day 3

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.

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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.

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 hospitalisation 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.

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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, children have plenty of time to enjoy travel opportunities.

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 a your child requires leave in term time, please complete a leave in term time application form (Appendix 2)

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) were 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

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.(See Appendix 1)

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 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 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.

All pupils with attendance below 90% will be placed immediately on an Attendance Action Plan.

If a pupil's attendance does not improve a range of options may be triggered. Further meetings with parents linking pupil progress and attendance.

- Home visit made by a member of the Pastoral Team
- Pupils/parents placed on Fast track process resulting in legal actions.

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- 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, we have introduced a number of initiatives to encourage children to attend school regularly.

At the end of each term, children with 100% attendance will receive a certificate and a prize

At the end of the academic year children with 98% or above attendance will receive either a trip off site or activities within the school site.

Taking children off

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 role 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 role.

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 unauthorised 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.



School Attendance

A very important message for all Parents/Carers

September 2019

Dear Parent/Carer,

West Heath Primary School is working in partnership with parents and the Local Authority to improve school attendance. **We would like to congratulate the many parents who make sure their children attend school regularly.**

Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and the whole class. Are you aware that children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve well in exams
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- are more likely to become involved in crime
- miss out on opportunities in further education and the world of work?

How does your child compare?

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent	which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons

Absence can only be authorised by the Head Teacher, within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations 2006. **Head Teachers may not authorise leave during term time except where the circumstances are exceptional.**

Please remember that parental illness, going shopping, visiting family, truancy, not wanting to go to school, alleged bullying (speak to school immediately to resolve the issue) are not acceptable reasons to be absent. All of these will be recorded as unauthorised absence, including if your child arrives at school after the close of registration.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the child to miss school for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school with support from staff and peers can provide children with stability. The routine of school offers a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

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

Legal action that may be taken includes:

- **Issuing penalty notices:** Each parent receives a penalty notice for each child who has unauthorised absence. The penalty is £60 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made. So, 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:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) - court can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.
- **Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) - court can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Being taken to court could result in you having a criminal record.

Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning and can seriously disadvantage your child in adult life.

If your child's level of absence is of serious concern, the school will offer advice and support to improve attendance. After this, any unauthorised absence may result in the School and the Local Authority taking legal action.

Again, we would like to thank those parents who make sure their child is attending school regularly and are therefore benefiting fully from their educational opportunity.

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