



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.

Audience

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

Aims

Being at school every day is important to a child's education. They benefit from well-planned sequences of lessons designed to ensure that they make the best possible progress. If they are frequently absent this learning is disrupted and makes it difficult to keep up.

Everyone that comes to West Heath is expected to aim for 97% attendance. 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/parents, they will also be set individual targets.

Children are expected to be in school, on time. If punctuality becomes an issue a letter will be sent home to the parent/carer requesting a meeting with the attendance officer. If this continues the family will be referred to Children's Services.

Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

- Every member of staff in school is responsible for ensuring good attendance punctuality of all children.
- The Inclusion Team specifically work to improve children's attendance; this includes the Family Support Worker, the Learning Mentor, the SENCO and the School Nurse.
- Parents have a legal duty to send their children to school each day that school is open, and 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 and pupils, and support services where necessary, to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils.

Procedure

Morning session

The school day starts at 8.50am. The register should not be completed until 8.50am it 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 should be sent to the school office no later than 12.30pm for EYFS, 12.45 for year 1 and 1.00pm for year 2 and 1.30pm for KS2. It is the class teacher's legal responsibility to ensure that the register, via ePortal, is completed properly at the start of the morning and afternoon session so that an accurate record of attendance is available and also for safeguarding purposes.

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

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 can't be made, then it may be considered appropriate for a home visit to be carried out by school staff.

Monitoring First Day Absence

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer a first day absence call will be made. The office staff making the calls will follow this system:

1. Phone parents contact number(s)
2. Repeat this during the first morning of absence in no response
3. Phone emergency contact number(s) to get an up-to-date contact number for the parent / carer and update the school system accordingly
4. If no contact can be made this must be reported to the attendance officer immediately so the best course of action can be established.

These calls are made by the school office staff following submission of the class registers from 8.55am. The parent/carer is contacted and asked to provide a reason as to why their child is not in school. The absence reason is recorded next to the child's name on the first day absence sheet that is stored in the S drive under attendance on the main computer system.

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.

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 date and time of the appointment should be shown to the school office before the day of the appointment.

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 attendance officer. Where further ongoing absences occur and there is 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 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. 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: 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.

Family holidays are NOT allowed during school time.

Leave in term time

From 1st September 2013, amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 made clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If a family requires leave in term time, please complete a leave in term time application form (Appendix 2)

Leave in Term Time (Penalty Notice) Process 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 (Penalty Notice) Process was developed to work in conjunction with the Fast track prosecution on Attendance, in order reduce the unauthorised leave taken by pupils in term time.

Attendance Policy 2018/19

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).

Monitoring of attendance

The attendance officer will receive a daily attendance report from the main office. This will show which children are absent and which children are late. The attendance officer will phone parents if the need arises and report Child Protection issues to Children's Services and or the police.

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. We have clear procedures and triggers for action based upon data analysis and contextual information for attendance. 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 with a member of the pastoral staff. They will discuss the reasons for absence and offer support and guidance in order to improve their child's attendance. All pupils with attendance below 90% will be placed immediately on a Persistent Absence Action Plan.

The Persistent Absence Action Plan is reviewed in weekly meeting by head teacher and the attendance officer.

If a pupil's attendance does not improve a range of options may be triggered e.g. 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.

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.

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

If there is no announcement of closure, you should assume that school is open. Please do not phone school at this time, since this blocks communication.

Children Missing in Education

If a pupil is absent from school without authorisation whose whereabouts are unknown, school must inform the local authority within the first five days of a pupil's absence. The local authority must carry out reasonable enquiries into the pupil's whereabouts with schools jointly. Referrals should be made promptly to the Left School No Trace Team at cme@birmingham.gcsx.gov.uk so that they can carry out our enquiry in tandem with school.

Reasonable Enquiries

As part of your school's reasonable enquiry, please ensure that the following actions are taken:

- A first day call to the parents/guardians of any child absent from school without prior authorisation.
- If the child's whereabouts cannot be established via first day calls to the parents/guardians, please contact all family telephone numbers held on the pupil's file.
- If the pupil is known to any other service such as Children's Social Care or Family Support, please contact them for any relevant information.
- Ask all school staff who may have contact with the pupil as well as classmates and any known relatives of the pupil.
- Conduct a timely home visit to the pupil's known address no later than within the first five days of absence.

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

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. Governors will review this policy, along with the Head teacher and the attendance officer annually.

Policy to be reviewed

September 2019

'Fast-Track to Attendance'

Fast-track to Attendance is an Early Help approach to legal intervention in cases of persistent pupil absence. Following appropriate interventions and meeting, if improvement in attendance does not occur the parents are prosecuted and face fines or, in extreme cases, custodial sentences.

Long Term Medical Absence

In some cases, a pupil may be absent from school long term due to an illness or injury. The school liaises with families in order to ensure children return to school quickly and that there are no safeguarding concerns.

For example, in the case of a broken leg, the school will hire a wheelchair and liaise with parents to write up care plans that ensure the child returns to school quickly.

On occasions where this is not possible the school will make a referral to the James Brindley School, which provides educational opportunities for pupils who are unable to attend their regular school.

School Refusal or Unauthorised Other Absence

If a child is absent long term for unauthorised circumstances (i.e. refusal to come to school, or persistent unauthorised absence) then a plan will be put in place to support the child and the family. In some instances, referrals will be made to other agencies to support the family. If appropriate an early help assessment will be carried out to determine the support needed.

TAKING CHILDREN OFF ROLL

SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

NO CHILD SHALL 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/EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT.

WHERE IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO VERIFY WHERE A CHILD IS, CHILDREN MISSING 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 DEPARTMENT ARE INFORMED AND A CHILD WILL ONLY BE TAKEN OFF ROLL ONCE THEY GIVE AUTHORISATION.

School Attendance

A very important message for all Parents/Carers

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.

Yours sincerely,



Lead Attendance Officer

Education Legal Intervention Team
Alternative Provision, Attendance,
and Independent Education Service
Birmingham City Council

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

Request **agreed / denied**

Signed Head Teacher Dated