



# WESTFIELD SCHOOL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

## Attendance Policy

MOST RECENT UPDATE: August 2024

# **WESTFIELD SCHOOL**

## **POLICY DOCUMENT**

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

#### ***Rationale***

Westfield School believes good attendance is crucial in helping students to fulfil their academic potential and emotional well-being.

The Department for Education (DfE) expects schools and local authorities to:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- 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.
- Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support.

*'DfE: Working together to improve school attendance' (August 2024)*

#### ***Context***

As a special school Westfield recognises that managing the attendance of children and young people needs to be carried out on an individual basis. Decisions taken will be based on the needs of pupils and in line with individual medical needs. The school will work in partnership with families and other professionals to make decisions about how best to support children and young people to achieve the highest possible attendance levels at school.

#### ***AIMS***

- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils.
- To promote outstanding progress towards pupils' individual outcomes.

- To support pupils to have the best attendance possible (based on individual needs and circumstance)
- To support families in making sure their child has the best attendance possible

Westfield is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all students. Regular attendance is critical if students are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. Attendance is encouraged through a variety of awards and incentives, thus achieving progress in line with predicted targets. The curriculum is planned in a progressive way, so periods of absence prevent learners from making links between ideas, skills and concepts, as well as embedding taught skills.

### **Expectations of parents/carers:**

- To support their child/young person to come to school daily. Recent guidance states that “... their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school”
- To inform the school in person as soon as possible if their child will not be attending, providing a reason for their absence
- To discuss any medical needs their child has with the Health Team, school nurse and/or class team so that strategies can be setup to enable them to attend school as frequently as possible.
- To engage with the school attendance procedures; including
  - Whenever possible, scheduling routine medical/dental appointments during the school holidays, or after school;
  - Using the official form to request all appointments attended during school time (attached, and also available on our school website) accompanied by the letter confirming the appointment. Ensure that their child attends school before and/or after the appointment wherever possible; appointments with no form completed in advance will be marked as unauthorised on the register
  - Respecting the registration times of 9.00am and 1.15pm, and the end of the school day at 3.15pm;
  - To take holidays during the 14 weeks when school is closed across the year, unless there are truly exceptional circumstances: any such requests must be in person, in advance, and will be referred to governors for consideration; NB: the most recent guidance no longer includes a code for ‘authorised family holiday’.

### **Expectations of school:**

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff promote full attendance at Westfield through;

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Consistent, clear communication with parents and pupils about the importance of regular, prompt, attendance.
- Training staff to meet the medical needs of individual pupils to enable them to be in school as much as possible

- Carrying out first day monitoring for pupils who are absent from school and to ask parents/carers to provide a reason for the absence
- Working with pupils and their families to improve attendance through
  - Meetings
  - Attendance targets
  - Attendance contracts
  - Parenting groups
  - Working with other professionals to support long term absence due to prolonged illness/hospital stay i.e home or blended learning tasks
- Providing parents with termly updates on their child's level of attendance
- Publishing attendance figures annually to the Local Authority and the DfE
- Students and groups with attendance of 95% or above will have their achievements recognised each week.
- Any child attending 95% or above for a full year, receives an Attendance Achievement Certificate.

**The school responds to non-attendance by:**

- The admin team contacts parents on the first day of an absence if no reason or notification has been received. Contact will be by telephone.
- If there is no response to the telephone call an email or text will be sent
- If there is no response to the first contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) may do a home visit. It may be necessary for the class teacher or headteacher to accompany her on this visit.
- Where a pattern of non-attendance is emerging, parents/carers will be invited to work with school staff to help resolve the difficulties

Pupils with significant health conditions may require extended periods of absence, for surgery and/ or recovery; these situations can always be explained and evidenced. In addition, many pupils attend a variety of medical appointments with different specialists due to their diagnoses. We also acknowledge the requirement for a 48-hour symptom free period following any episode of gastroenteritis, in accordance with Department of Health guidance.

- **All** absences, whether authorised or unauthorised, are recoded as absences. A list of all reasons for absence is attached. If the reason provided by parents/carers does not feature on this list, eg. visiting relatives, birthdays etc, then the absence will be deemed unauthorised, even if the school has been informed.

This policy was presented to the Children's Families and Community Governor on xx and subsequently adopted by the Governing Body. To be reviewed annually

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Contents of Attendance Register

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present;
- Late arrival before register has closed; (L)
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

### **List of authorised absence attendance codes used:**

#### **Absent - leave of absence**

**Code C1:** Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad

**Code M:** Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment

**Code J1:** Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution

**Code S:** Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination

**Code X:** Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school

Under compulsory school age.

In cases where a parent wishes their child to begin school on a part-time basis in line with the school admissions code, schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority may give leave of absence for sessions the pupil is not expected to attend. This must be agreed between the school and the parent they normally live with and must end at the point at which the pupil reaches compulsory school age. The times and dates when the pupil is expected to attend the school must be agreed by the school and the parent with whom the pupil normally lives with.

Over compulsory school age.

Where a sixth form pupil's timetable does not require them to be on site for every session of the week, a school maintained by a local authority or a special school not maintained by a local authority may give leave of absence. The times and dates when the pupil is expected to attend the school must be agreed with the parent with whom the pupil normally lives with or the pupil

**Code C2:** Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

**Code C:** Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

***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.***

***Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance***

#### **Absent - other authorised reasons**

Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes

Code R: Religious observance

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)

Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

**Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause**

Code Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements

Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available

Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel

Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed

Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed

Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention

Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

**Absent - unauthorised absence**

Code G: Holiday not granted by the school

Code N: Reason for absence not yet established

Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

*Taken from 'Department for Education; Working Together to improve School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities'. August 2024*

## Pupil Leave Request Appointments

<b>Date of request:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Date of absence:</b>	
<b>Reason for request: (Appointment letters must be attached)</b>	
<b>Time you wish to collect your child:</b>	
<b>Time of appointment:</b>	
<b>Time expected to return to school:</b>	
<b>Signed:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

### To be completed by the class teacher

<b>Recorded on MIS:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

### To be completed by the Head Teacher

<b>Authorised:</b>	Yes/ No
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	