



The  
Westgate School

#equippedforlife

# Attendance Policy

<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>Date:</b> 21/09/22
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### 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

### 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## **3. Roles and responsibilities**

### **3.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

There is not a specific governor linked to attendance, but figures and trends in are monitored at each full governors meeting as a collective responsibility.

### **3.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Roddy Clark and can be contacted via the school phone number or on [ric@westgate.slough.sch.uk](mailto:ric@westgate.slough.sch.uk)

### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the designated senior leader (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Kerry Judd and can be contacted via the school phone number or **KMJ@westgate.slough.sch.uk**

### **3.5 Class teachers/form tutors**

Tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis during AM registrations with classroom teachers recording each individual lesson including PM registration, using the correct codes, and submitting this information onto the SIMs software within the first 10 minutes of each session.

### **3.6 School admin staff**

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Monitor 'school gateway' software to update registers.
- Transfer calls from parents to the pastoral team, tutors or directors of learning in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance where appropriate.

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every timetabled session on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:30 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return. This includes post 16 students.
- On return, parents are expected to provide a written note to be handed to tutors during the first session in order to update registers.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child, ensuring this is regularly updated
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session, on time
- Sixth Form students are expected to attend all lessons and also allocated independent study sessions as per their timetables.

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- › Whether the absence is authorised or not
- › The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- › The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:50am and will be kept open until 09:00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 14:40pm and will be kept open until 15:00pm

## **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08:30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin/office staff (see also section 7) or by utilizing the school gateway software.

- The school admin office number is 01753 521 320, when there is not any staff available to take the call, a voicemail system is available for parents and careers to use.
- A absence can be reported through the school gateway, either through the app or online. All parents are advised to create an account once their child starts the school and can access their account through the website under Parents>schoolgateway>click the login tab at the bottom. Additionally, there is a guide to downloading the app on this webpage. From here parents can report an absences using the message tool.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

To authenticate absence, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

## **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

This can be done by contacting the school admin office or utilizing the school comms process.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## **4.4 Children with Health Needs**

## **4.5 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- › Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- › After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Lateness and punctuality is monitored daily using the punctuality procedure to issue sanctions where appropriate. When a student receives a late mark for the morning, senior leadership will issue a 30 min - 1 hour same day detention. Parental communication will be made before 11:30am giving notice of sanctions

implemented. For persistent offenders, there is a phasing system in place which indicates the next steps, which can be found in appendix B. Moreover, the rewards system will promote being punctual to the students using the token system, which can be found in the behaviour policy.

## 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

Day 1 - Using the School Gateway system, a message will be sent to the pupil's parent/carer on the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.

Day 2 – The second consecutive day without contact, the attendance officer will call the pupils parents/carer. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact external agencies if there is a safeguarding concern.

Day 3 - A third day of no contact, the school may issue a home visit to the pastoral team.

Aim:

- To Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- To Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- The school will call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

## 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The School will send half termly updates of student attendance via email or a letter. This will include information about procedures and contacts to help support students and parents/carers. Additionally it will provide information of subsequent steps where appropriate.

# 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

## 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least a day before the absence is due to start. This should take the form as a letter written and signed by parents/carers and brought into reception in person. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.
- Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the headteacher may grant term-time holiday
- Study leave
- Flexi-schooling requests – your school can add details of its procedures for requesting and deciding on this

## 5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 6. Strategies promoting attendance

The school deems high attendance as vital in supporting a developing young people. The school highlights and praises those pupils who do this consistently through the following strategies:

- Systematic attendance and punctuality reward system
- Post cards home
- Parental communication
- Assemblies
- Periodic celebrations
- Spotlights

The Westgate School promotes 100% attendance every 2 weeks by embedding attendance in the core of our rewards systems. Students will be awarded tokens to use and buy rewards of their choice in the school shop.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

Attendance is monitored by a variety of stakeholders across the school alongside the attendance officer and designated senior leader.

Tutors are given ownership to manage their own registers and encouraged to involve the wider pastoral team when there is prolonged absence.

Directors of learning are tasked with the oversight of attendance identifying trends and patterns within their year groups. This informs interventions and support given to specific pupils.

Senior leadership has a set of metrics to analyse weekly to provide a holistic overview of attendance, which includes analysing specific groups based on age, ethnicity, PP, SEN and sex. The aim of this is to intervene on a strategic level where appropriate.

## **7.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board also utilizing such software as FFT Aspire to support this.

The school will take steps to develop individual students attendance by using 5 phases of interventions dependent on the severity of absence (Appendix 2)

## **7.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

## **7.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to subject teachers/tutors and directors of learning, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

## **7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- If a student's attendance falls below 96% they will be monitored as per the Attendance Officers data log. The Attendance officer will liaise with the tutor and Director of learning to make contact with parents/carers for a meeting. A plan will be created to support the student's attendance this may include intensive pastoral support and use of the in-school counselor.
- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school this should include any external agencies that are involved with the student/family.



- Conduct regular home visits
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance including but not limited to - Slough Children's First (trust) and the services available to the trust including SIASS – Safer In A Slough School (Virtual school).
- Target unauthorized absence through letters, school comms, further meetings and in some cases attendance reports.
- Liaise regularly with Iram Basharat the schools designated Attendance Officer from the Local Authority.

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by Roddy Clark (Assistant Headteacher)

At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

### Appendix A: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>/</b>	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
<b>\</b>	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
<b>L</b>	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>B</b>	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>J</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school

<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason

		for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Appendix 2 – Punctuality Phases

Phase 1 1-4 lates	Phase 2 5-9 lates	Phase 3 10-14 lates	Phase 4 15-19 lates	Phase 5 20+ lates
Response	Response	Response	Response	Response
<b>Form Tutor</b> marks the pupil as 'late' in the register Records Late on class charts <b>Class Teacher</b> marks the pupil as 'late' in the register Records Late on class charts	<b>Form Tutor</b> marks the pupil as 'late' in the register Records Late on class charts <b>Class Teacher</b> marks the pupil as 'late' in the register Records Late on class charts	<b>Form Tutor</b> marks the pupil as 'late' in the register Records Late on class charts <b>Class Teacher</b> marks the pupil as 'late' in the register Records Late on class charts	<b>Form Tutor</b> marks the pupil as 'late' in the register Records Late on class charts <b>Class Teacher</b> marks the pupil as 'late' in the register Records Late on class charts	<b>Form Tutor</b> marks the pupil as 'late' in the register Records Late on class charts <b>Class Teacher</b> marks the pupil as 'late' in the register Records Late on class charts
Actions	Actions	Actions	Actions	Actions
Logged on class charts by tutor 'Late to school AM' Tutor discussion with student to reinforce process <b>30 minute after school detention</b>  <u>Class Teacher - Lessons</u> C1 issued for lateness Monitor and ring home for persistent lateness	Logged on class charts by tutor 'Late to school AM' Pupil sits a centralised same day 1 hour <b>after-school detention</b>  <u>Class Teacher - Lessons</u> C1 issued for lateness Monitor and ring home for persistent lateness	Logged on class charts by tutor 'Late to school AM' Pupil sits a centralised same day <b>1-hour after-school detention</b>  <u>Director of Learning</u> holds parent meeting to solve punctuality issues & places pupil on 1-week punctuality report  <u>Class Teacher - Lessons</u> C1 issued for lateness Monitor and ring home for persistent lateness	Logged on class charts by tutor 'Late to school AM' Pupil sits a centralised same day <b>1 hour after-school detention</b>  <u>Director of Learning</u> holds parent meeting to review last strategies & places pupil on 2-week punctuality report  <u>Class Teacher - Lessons</u> C1 issued for lateness Monitor and ring home for persistent lateness	Logged on class charts by tutor 'Late to school AM' Pupil sits a centralised same day <b>1-hour community service</b>  <u>Director of Learning</u> holds parent meeting to review last strategies & places pupil on 3-week punctuality report  <u>Class Teacher - Lessons</u> C1 issued for lateness Monitor and ring home for persistent lateness

Appendix 3 – Attendance Phases

<b>Phase 1</b> <i>1-4 Days Absent</i>	<b>Phase 2</b> <i>5-9 Days Absent</i>	<b>Phase 3</b> <i>10-14 Days Absent</i>	<b>Phase 4</b> <i>15-19 Days Absent</i>	<b>Phase 5</b> <i>20+ Days Absent</i>
<i>Response</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Response/Actions:</i>
<b><u>Attendance Officer</u></b> 1 <sup>st</sup> day response text message to ascertain reason for absence. 2 <sup>nd</sup> day response phone call to ascertain reason for absence. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Day response home visit to ascertain reason for absence.	<b><u>Attendance Officer</u></b> 1 <sup>st</sup> day response text message to ascertain reason for absence. 2 <sup>nd</sup> day response phone call to ascertain reason for absence. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Day response home visit to ascertain reason for absence.	<b><u>Attendance Officer</u></b> 1 <sup>st</sup> day response text message to ascertain reason for absence. 2 <sup>nd</sup> day response phone call to ascertain reason for absence. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Day response home visit to ascertain reason for absence.	<b><u>Attendance Officer</u></b> 1 <sup>st</sup> day response text message to ascertain reason for absence. 2 <sup>nd</sup> day response phone call to ascertain reason for absence. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Day response home visit to ascertain reason for absence.	<b><u>Attendance Officer</u></b> 1 <sup>st</sup> day response text message to ascertain reason for absence. 2 <sup>nd</sup> day response phone call to ascertain reason for absence. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Day response home visit to ascertain reason for absence.
<i>Actions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Actions</i>
	<b><u>Tutor</u></b>	<b><u>Attendance Officer</u></b>	<b><u>Director of Learning</u></b>	

	One-week attendance report to tutor. (Report continues until 5 consecutive days of 100% attendance reached)	<p>To liaise with all stakeholders informing of phase 3</p> <p><b><u>Director of Learning</u></b></p> <p>Two-week attendance report to Director of Learning. (Report continues until 10 consecutive days of 100% attendance reached)</p> <p><b><u>Attendance Officer &amp; Director of Learning</u></b></p> <p>Hold a formal parent meeting for students who reach 12 days absence to address potential escalation of absenteeism</p>	<p>Referral student to safeguarding team for PA</p> <p><b><u>Assistant Principal</u></b></p> <p>Three-week attendance report to Assistant Principal. (Report continues until 15 consecutive days of 100% attendance reached)</p> <p><b><u>Director of Learning &amp; Assistant Principal</u></b></p> <p>Hold a formal parent meeting for students who reach 17 days absence to address potential escalation of absenteeism.</p> <p><b><u>Safeguarding Team</u></b></p> <p>Student discussed in weekly attendance meeting with safeguarding with close monitoring to take place.</p>	<p><b><u>Assistant Principal</u></b></p> <p>Four-week attendance report to Assistant Principal. (Report continues until 20 consecutive days of 100% attendance reached)</p> <p><b><u>Assistant Principal &amp; Deputy Headteacher</u></b></p> <p>Fortnightly parent meeting to address potential escalation of absenteeism.</p> <p><b><u>Safeguarding Team</u></b></p> <p>Student discussed in weekly attendance meeting with safeguarding with close monitoring to take place. With potential external agency involvement</p>
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