



Attendance for Learning Policy

Approval Date – November 2016

Review Date – November 2019

It is the policy of the governors of Westfield Academy to support effective learning and teaching by encouraging all students to attend school and lessons on time each day, so that they have the opportunity to attain their full potential and maximise life chances.

Rationale

There is a shared responsibility within the school to encourage high levels of attendance and punctuality. The values of the school, set out in the ABC charter, reflect the importance of *Attendance and Belonging*, and the provision of a welcoming, caring environment where all members of the school community feel safe and secure.

Clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and the consistent implementation of procedures, ensure that attendance and punctuality are addressed effectively to support successful learning. The policy fully adheres to the legal requirements regarding attendance and the registration of students. The school will follow all procedures set out in the Department of Education policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education, (September 2016) working to safeguard children.

Effective partnership and liaison with outside agencies provides support, advice and guidance for students and parents. Rigorous intervention is triggered by a systematic approach to the monitoring and analysis of attendance data. Patterns of good attendance and punctuality are celebrated and rewarded, and students who make every effort to improve are encouraged and recognised.

We are fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and follow best practice procedures to ensure their safety.

Related Documents

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Monitoring

This policy is monitored by the Governors' Student Matters Sub-Committee by using the following evidence:

- Report from the Inclusion Leader focussing on analysis of attendance data.
- Report from the Inclusion Leader on partnerships with the County Educational Welfare Service.

Responsible

Julie Coles – Inclusion Leader

APPENDIX 1 – ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

3.1. Registration

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other students in the class. It is paramount therefore that all students arrive at school on time. The school site is open from 8.00am with the first bell sounding at 8.25am.

- by law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every student.
- registration takes place at 8.30am and students who arrive after 8.30am will be recorded as late to school.
- registers close at 9.00am and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority.
- electronic registers are taken every lesson throughout the school day. Afternoon registration is taken at 1.45pm.
- persistent lateness by a student will be dealt with through the Head of House and may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.
- a student's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their Progress Report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.
- subject teachers must take a register within the first 10 minutes for each lesson during the day so that an overall record of student attendance in individual lessons is maintained.

The register is a legal document and must be completed accurately.

3.2. Procedure for completing the register – The responsibility of the Subject Teacher/ Tutor

It is the Subject Teacher's/Form Tutor's legal responsibility to maintain an accurate register according to the agreed procedures. It is essential that the instructions are followed exactly and the teacher liaises with the Attendance Officer to address any concerns that arise:

- *Log onto sims.registration and open the class list*
- *Register must be taken within the first 10 minutes of each session*
- *Ensure that students are silent while register is taken and students respond appropriately when name is called out*
- *Use correct coding to record present (/), absence (N) and lateness (L)*
- *Additional information may be recorded by the teacher as 'Notes' by each students' name*
- *Entries must be saved by clicking 'Save' button*

NB It is important that registers are completed correctly and on time. This enables the Attendance Officer to confirm an absence with parents/carers who may not be aware their child is not in school. It ensures that parents/carers have confidence in the records and will take absence information received seriously. It also provides the necessary evidence for the Education Welfare Service to proceed with prosecution where the needs arise.

3.3. Expectations for good attendance

We consider that good attendance is 95% or above.

100%	Exceptional attendance.
95 - 99%	Good attendance.
90 - 94%	Attendance level is cause for concern .
Less than 90%	Poor attendance and is classified by the Government as Persistent Absence .

We expect that all students will:

- attend school every day.
- attend school punctually.

- attend appropriately prepared for the day.
- discuss promptly with their class teacher or Head of House any problems that may affect their school attendance.

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day.
- ensure that they contact the school daily of absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school.
- contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.
- notify school immediately of any changes to contact details.
- attend meetings at the school as requested.
- provide medical evidence for absence as requested (this may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, prescription or medicine bottle or hospital letter).

We expect that the school will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere.
- provide a safe learning environment.
- provide a sympathetic response to any student's or parent's/carer's concerns.
- keep regular and accurate records of morning and afternoon attendance and punctuality and monitor each individual student's attendance and punctuality
- contact parents/carers each day when a student fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers. Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested.
- encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition.
- regularly inform parents/carers of the percentage attendance of all students.
- make initial inquiries regarding students who are not attending regularly.
- meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality.
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service. Failure by the family to comply with planned support set by the Education Welfare Officer may result in further actions, e.g. a Parenting Contract, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order.

3.4. Absence from School

Absences are either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a student to be out of school, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences must be treated as unauthorised.

Keeping a child off school with minor ailments such as headache, sore throat or slight cold is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require the school to request that the parent/carer obtain medical evidence from their doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, prescription, medicine bottle or hospital letter.

The Attendance Officer will record whether all absences are authorised or unauthorised, and will categorise the reason onto the SIMS system with the appropriate coding.

Student Leaving During the School Day

During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the students are during the school day.

- Students are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents/carers should try and arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- parents/carers are requested to confirm, by letter, email or telephone call, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time.
- Students must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return at the student reception.
- Where a student is being collected from the school, parents/carers are to report to the school reception before the student is allowed to leave the site.
- If a student leaves the school site without permission and we are aware of it, their parents/carers will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family to may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the student as a missing person.

3.5. Processing Absences

The **Attendance Officer** will input confirmed absences received by telephone or letter directly onto the *database* – these are either *authorised or un-authorised absences*.

The **Attendance Officer** will investigate all absences which have not been confirmed by telephoning parents/carers (first day contact), by text message or by letter.

Form Tutors must ensure that notes confirming absence are handed to the Attendance Officer and that letters requesting confirmation of absence are distributed immediately.

Persistent failure to provide confirmation of absence will be reported to the Head of House. The Head of House and Attendance Officer will agree appropriate contact with parents/carer. A regular coordinated review is also conducted of all students, specifically targeting persistent absentees, with the County Education Welfare Officer.

3.6. Leave of Absence- Planned

Parents/carers should avoid withdrawing their child from school during term time. Parents/carers must seek permission for planned absence by requesting an 'absence request form' from the Attendance Officer. The Head of House, holds responsibility for this decision and will consider whether there are exceptional circumstances and liaise with the Attendance Office to review attendance and behaviour records.

Approved absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Parents will be contacted by the Attendance Officer to confirm whether or not the request has been granted.

The Form Tutor is also informed of the decision so that accurate records can be maintained.

3.7. School Approved Absence or Educational Visits

Such activities may include:

- Educational visits or field trips
- Sporting events (fixtures or sports days etc)
- Enrichment courses
- Extended Work Experience placements
- Fixed Term Exclusions

The member of staff responsible must inform the Attendance Officer of students involved prior to the absence and circulate names to staff via e-mail.

It is essential that the member of staff responsible for organising an educational visit, work placement, sporting event or enrichment course also completes all the necessary documentation including risk assessments (see policy on [Organising School Visits](#)).

The Attendance Officer will use the appropriate coding to record these absences as 'authorised' or 'educated off site'.

3.8 Lateness

Punctuality to lessons is expected at all times. Lateness should always be challenged by subject teachers and Form Tutors.

Lateness to School

Lateness to school is reviewed fortnightly by the Attendance Officer, Education Welfare Officer and Head of House as part of the Attendance Review process. If a student is persistently late to registration a targeted intervention is pursued. Parents/carers will be informed by text message, telephone call or letter.

Lateness to Lessons

Lateness to lessons is recorded with an 'L' marked on the register and number of 'minutes late' noted.

The statutory registration period closes at 9.00am in the morning and at 2.15pm in the afternoon. All late's after this point are deemed unauthorised and will require a written explanation or telephone call from parents/carers.

Lateness to lessons is monitored by the form tutor and Attendance Officer. Parents/carers will be informed by letter.

Subject teachers will:

- Expect students to arrive for lessons on time and start lessons promptly – do not wait for latecomers.
- Take the register within the first 10 minutes to give an orderly, focused start to lessons, spot patterns of lateness and absence etc.
- Take appropriate action if students arrive late to the lesson without a note or acceptable reason – record lateness (L) and minutes late to lesson on the register, keep student behind at end of class, inform tutor of concerns.
- Not allow students to leave the classroom during lessons unless they have a medical note, appointment slip or there is an emergency.

3.9. Patterns of Low or Irregular Attendance

The Inclusion Leader, Attendance Officer and Head of House will monitor any irregular or low patterns of attendance and punctuality. The Attendance Officer, together with the Head of House, will discuss these cases with the Education Welfare Officer every two weeks at the Attendance Review Meetings to agree actions to be taken by the school and/or Education Welfare Service.

The Attendance Officer and Head of House will draw up a 'target list' of Persistent Absentees and those students deemed to be vulnerable. The Attendance Officer will operate a **first day contact** policy when these students are absent from school.

First day contact will also operate for those students whose parents/carers are suspected of condoning unauthorised absence.

If no progress is made then a second letter is sent requiring parents/carers to attend a meeting at school with Head of House and Attendance Office. At this stage an Attendance Support Plan will be implemented. This will involve initial meeting with student and parents/carers to agree target and action

plan, monitoring by Form Tutor and Attendance Officer and follow up meeting between Head of House, parents and student to review progress, if required.

If there is still no progress, a meeting with the Inclusion Leader may be held or alternatively a referral to Education Welfare Service will be made.

Since 01 September 2013, schools have the opportunity to request the Local Authority issue a Warning Notice or a Penalty Notice when a student has at least 10 unauthorised sessions within the previous 12 weeks. This can be requested prior to the Education Welfare Officer becoming involved with a family, and is being implemented as the Warning Notice and is considered a more effective tool when used as an early intervention.

Schools can request a warning notice giving a family a 15 school day period where they attend school every day in order to pass (100% attendance to pass). If not passed, then a Penalty Notice could be issued or Warning Notice withdrawn and move directly to a parental prosecution. Although this is a government reform, Westfield Academy fully supports this amendment and will be following the Local Authority's current process in improving attendance. A penalty notice could be applied for if a child has at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 12 week period.

3.10. Child Missing From Education

All schools have a duty to inform the local authority of any student who is going to be deleted from the admission register, who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent for a period of 10 school days or more. This duty does not apply when a student's name is removed from the admission register at standard transition points – when the student has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school – unless the local authority requests that such returns are to be made.

If a looked after child or a child subjected to a Child Protection plan goes missing, Westfield Academy will refer them to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) within 48 hours. A referral to the MASH should also be considered for any child being withdrawn from school with the intent to be electively home educated where there are safeguarding concerns.

3.11. Truancy

Truancy is the act of deliberately staying away from school without good reason or permission / absence from classroom, onsite – all truancy is unauthorised absence.

The Head of House will:

- Inform parents/carers of the dates and times of truancy.
- Place the student on an Attendance Report Card to monitor attendance in lessons and at break/lunch.
- Issue a school detention, with a letter generated and sent home by the School admin staff. In persistent cases of truancy, this will result in a period of time in the Internal Exclusion room.

Specific cases of post-registration truancy will also be dealt with:

- Subject teachers and Attendance Officer will monitor lesson registers and identify any unexplained absences from specific lessons.
- The Attendance Officer will inform parents/carers, Head of House and Form Tutor of concerns.
- Student will be placed on an Attendance Report Card to monitor attendance in lessons and at break/lunch.
- A school detention will be issued, with a letter generated and sent home by the School admin staff.
- School will contact Police, Children's Social Care and other agencies, as appropriate.

3.12. Reintegration

There is a statutory requirement to set work that can be done at home when students who are absent from school for approved reasons over a prolonged period of time, e.g. sustained illness or injury, fixed

term exclusion etc. The Head of House will liaise with admin staff to coordinate the collection of schoolwork and the frequency with which it is sent home or use Google Classroom.

The Head of House will meet with the Inclusion Leader to discuss the reintegration of students who are returning to school after a sustained period of absence. It may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following strategies:

- An initial reduction in timetable.
- Permanent modified curriculum.
- Private study time for catch up work e.g. SEN withdrawal.
- Extra support in class.
- Increased pastoral support – Form Tutor, Head of House, Connexions, School Nurse etc.
- Attendance Support Plan.

Individual subject teachers must also make provision for students returning to their class after extended periods of absence – providing peer support and catch up materials as appropriate.

3.13. Rewarding Attendance

The Form Tutor is instrumental in recognising and encouraging good attendance and punctuality in the tutor group. Students with 100% attendance or who make a genuine effort to improve their attendance will be praised by their Form Tutor and referred to the Head of House or Inclusion Leader for formal congratulations.

Good attendance is acknowledged and rewarded in many ways, including the following:

- Heads of House certificates and prizes are given in reward assemblies, 6 times a year for 100% attendance or greatly improved attendance.
- Medals and certificates are presented to students who attain 100% attendance each year or have made genuine efforts to improve their attendance in the end of school year assembly.
- Prize draws at the end of each half term, sponsored by local businesses.