

WESTWOOD SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

“Regular school attendance has always been important. Without it the efforts of the best teachers and the best school will come to nothing. Education provides a means of advancement for all young people. Pupils need to attend regularly to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them in law. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. It places children at risk and, in some cases it can result in pupils being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.” (DFCSF)

The Westwood School firmly accepts the above and has a strong system in place to enable those in it to do everything in their power to promote this philosophy. We believe that good attendance is important:

- It is a pre-requisite for a successful school experience;
- It is an achievement in its own right;
- It is important in preparing pupils to be responsible adults.

It is important that everyone – pupils, parents, staff and external services work together to enable it to happen. Promoting good attendance is a **whole school priority**.

Aims & Objectives

- To raise attendance levels to above 92%;
- To reduce the level of unauthorised absences;
- To increase the level of contact by parents on the first day of their child’s absence;
- To improve levels of punctuality on a daily basis.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

All absence is authorised by the school if we receive an acceptable explanation from parents. Unauthorised absence is when a pupil is absent and no explanation is provided by parents/carers or the explanation given is unacceptable to the school. The school will ensure that parents understand that it is their responsibility by law to make sure that their child attends school. This is done through the home-school agreement, at Parents’ Evenings, through the School Website and at the Induction Evening for new pupils. Parents and pupils are reminded that punctuality is also their responsibility.

Holidays during term-time

The Government’s own guidance on the issue of term-time holidays states:

‘Parents should not normally take pupils on holiday during term-time’.

If a parent takes a pupil on holiday in term-time without the Head Teacher’s permission, or if a child fails to return from holiday by the agreed date, this should be recorded as unauthorised on the pupil’s school attendance record. If a pupil has not returned to school within 10 school days of the expected agreed date of return, the Head Teacher may take the pupil off roll.

The Assistant Head Teacher (Student Welfare) will make the final decision on whether a parental request for holiday in term-time is approved. The following factors will be taken into account when reaching this decision:

- The pupil's overall attendance pattern (*when attendance is below 90%*);
- Holidays already taken in the same school year;
- The child's stage of education;
- The ability of the child to catch up on the work they have missed;
- Time and duration of the holiday;
- Proximity to SATs and GCSE exams and course work deadlines;
- The reasons for taking holiday in term-time;
- Whether the parents are restricted in terms of leave by their employer;
- Whether the holiday is in the child's best interest.

The school has a clear set of procedures that are followed when requests for term-time holidays are made. The procedures are outlined below:

- 1 Parents must complete a formal request form a minimum of two weeks prior to their holiday;
- 2 The form must be handed to the Assistant Headteacher (Student Welfare) to make a decision on the parental request (based on the above criteria);
- 3 The School Attendance Clerk will contact parents to inform them if the request has been approved and will enforce the importance of ensuring pupils collect the work they will miss before they go on holiday;
- 4 If the request is rejected, the Assistant Head teacher will contact the parents to explain why the request was rejected and make them aware that the holiday will be classed as unauthorised absence. This contact will be made within 5 days of the request form being handed in to the school;
- 5 If the absence is to be unauthorised, the Assistant Head teacher (Student Welfare) will make a referral to Education Welfare Service and consider removal from roll if the conditions for this are met;
- 6 Holiday Request forms will be retained in the student file.

Extended Holidays Overseas

Parents are encouraged, in the student planner, website and prospectus, to time their holiday to overlap official school holidays. Parents are made aware that if a holiday is for more than 10 days to visit family overseas, the authorisation of this is at the Head Teacher's discretion and will take into account the educational needs and stage of the child. This extended holiday must be discussed with the Head teacher. The Head Teacher will endeavour to stress the educational impact an extended holiday will have on the pupil. It is made clear to parents that if the holiday is not authorised this could result in a Penalty Notice being issued or the pupil being removed from roll if they have not returned to school within 10 school days of the agreed date.

Management & Organisation

Whole school strategies

- Primary attendance data collected and analysed when Year 7 join to ensure early intervention;
- Register taken for all lessons;
- Contact made with parents on the first day of a pupil's absence;

- Letters sent after 3 days' absence if contact not made by parents;
- Attendance figures are published on a weekly basis for staff and pupils;
- Attendance figures monitored each week by AHT (student welfare);
- Attendance figures produced for Governing Body meetings;
- Attendance figures monitored termly and letter sent to good and poor attenders;
- Target groups identified for the monitoring process;
- Senior and Middle Leaders will monitor a targeted group of pupils, below 80% attendance, on a weekly basis. The target group will vary from term to term depending on the progress made by pupils on a termly basis;
- Attendance awards are given regularly. New Gold, Silver and Bronze attendance certificates will be issued at the end of each term to reward good attendance. Gold badges will be awarded to pupils with 100% attendance at the end of each term;
- Targets set for individuals and for tutor groups;
- **Attendance** and **Punctuality** is recorded on each pupils' report;
- All school reports to include positive and negative impact of attendance on learning;
- Every student will be set an attendance target at the start of each term. This target will be reviewed by the student and form tutor at the end of each term;
- Pupils to complete a weekly 'Attendance Log' to record their weekly attendance figures and set / review personal attendance targets;
- 'Attendance Incentive Scheme' to reward tutor groups with the highest attendance patterns throughout the year;
- Tutors will display a 'Traffic Light' sheet, on a half-termly basis, in their tutor rooms. This will allow pupils to track their own progress against whole school targets every half-term;
- Attendance and Achievement notice board to promote / reward attendance.

Working with Parents

- Inform parents of new pupils through Intake Evening, Brochure, Home/School Agreement;
- Inform parents of 100% attendees in Newsletter;
- Inform parents by using displays of attendance percentages on Parents Evening;
- Invite parents to Presentation Assemblies – to be at least once a term;
- Award pupils for excellent attendance at the Annual Awards Evening;
- Involve parents in the development and close monitoring of 'Attendance Action Plans' for pupils with attendance below 80%;
- Inform parents of attendance and punctuality through annual reports;
- Begin to use 'Real Time Reporting' to allow parents to access information on their child's attendance on the VLP;

Form Tutors

As the first point of contact with pupils, tutors are vital in promoting good attendance and punctuality.

- A formal routine should exist for registers being taken accurately each morning;
- Explanations of absences always required from pupils on their return to school (see below);
- Complete weekly attendance sheets and return to attendance clerk and return at the end of registration every Wednesday;
- Enquiries made about unexplained absences. Follow up on a daily basis;
- Look out for any trends/patterns in a pupil's attendance record and inform the Pastoral Director of any specific attendance concerns at the weekly year team meeting;
- Inform Pastoral Director of future known absences (e.g. hospital appointment);

- Attendance figures discussed with class on a weekly basis. Display weekly attendance figure on notice board in tutor room;
- Display 'Attendance Incentive Scheme' graph and information on a weekly basis;
- Ensure pupils complete their 'Attendance Log' on a weekly basis. Work with individual pupils to set personal attendance targets (weekly / termly);
- Display attendance traffic light sheets in tutor room every half-term to allow pupils to track their own progress against the whole school targets;
- All lateness discussed with individual pupil and the importance of punctuality emphasised. Contact parents / guardians or Pastoral Director as appropriate;
- Contribute to the Achievement / Attendance boards to promote good attendance.

On the return of pupils after holidays tutors will acknowledge the pupil and encourage the catching up of work, with the use of the Catch-up card.

Pastoral Director

- Advise on and implement whole school strategies;
- Make attendance a high profile issue regularly (visits to tutor groups, assemblies, etc.);
- Monitor daily list of absentees;
- Monitor and analyse year group's attendance (individually and target groups);
- Establish trigger points for direct intervention with individuals causing concern over attendance;
- Investigate causes of absence and plan strategies with tutors, parents, EWO and outside agencies as appropriate;
- Contact parents / guardians immediately if a pupil is suspected of truanting from school;
- Congratulate pupils on good/improved attendance and punctuality as appropriate;
- Co-ordinate a plan for return of long-term absentees/truants, liaising with pupils, parents, teachers, Deputy Head Teacher, SENCO, EWO, Connexions PA and attendance clerk;
- Organise awards for good/improved attendance;
- Pupils to receive good/improved attendance certificates/letters;
- Pupils to receive good/improved attendance certificates / letter;
- Only those pupils who have an acceptable attendance to be allowed to participate in school trips;
- Monitor the completion of the weekly 'Attendance Record Logs'.

Role of Departments / Subject Teacher

- Take a register each lesson, publicly and formally using laptop or classroom computer. If Bromcom is not working, a paper register must be taken and sent to the Attendance Clerk;
- Inform Curriculum and Pastoral Directors of any concerns about regular absences from lesson(s);
- Plan work for absent pupils, either to send home or to assist on pupils' return;
- Offer positive support to pupils when they return from absence;
- Acknowledge pupil return from absence;
- Make the Attendance Clerk aware of any changes to class lists immediately;
- Subject leaders must speak with staff who fail to complete their registers.

Leadership Team Member(s) (with responsibility for attendance and punctuality)

- Support Pastoral Directors, attendance clerk, home-school liaison worker and EWO;

- Monitor attendance and punctuality figures (individuals and target groups);
- Hold weekly liaison meetings with attendance clerk and EWO;
- Liaise with parents, staff, EWO and external agencies regarding extreme cases of absence and lateness;
- Present attendance figures at Governing Body meetings;
- Monitor whole school incentive scheme and co-ordinate certification process to reward good levels of attendance;
- Co-ordinate setting of individual attendance targets and the completion of attendance logs;
- Co-ordinate Attendance target groups and overview the completion of 'Attendance Action Plans'

Attendance Officer

- Telephone parents of pupils on the **first day of absence**;
- Focus on the attendance of targeted pupils (Green and Amber groups – see attached flow diagram);
- Contact parents on the third day of absence by letter where no satisfactory explanation has been received;
- Liaise daily with tutors and Pastoral Directors about communication of absences/ lates;
- Contact staff who have not taken their registers. Lists of non-taken registers to be placed on notice board in staff room and Heads of Department / Faculty to be notified if registers are still not taken within departments;
- Attend weekly meetings with Deputy Head Teacher and EWO;
- Provide data analysis for Leadership Team, Pastoral Directors, Tutors and Governors;
- Liaise with Pastoral Directors to facilitate awards for attendance and punctuality;
- Co-ordinate the weekly 'Attendance Incentive Scheme';
- Generate attendance letters to be sent home to parents. Focus on targets groups in each year to inform parents of their progress;
- Provide Heads of Year / Form Tutors with weekly attendance figures – individual pupils and tutor group figures;
- Produce and circulate termly attendance targets;
- Produce and circulate attendance traffic light information to form tutors / pastoral directors at the end of each half-term;
- Send information to Attendance Mentors each week to allow them to monitor the progress of their allocated pupils;
- Contact subject staff who fail to take their registers and inform subject leaders if this becomes a regular concern.

Pastoral Support Assistant

- Monitor weekly punctuality figures;
- Send weekly data to form tutors / pastoral directors on punctuality figures;
- Send letters to parents informing them of punctuality detentions (set if a student is late two or more times each week);
- Send information to parents / pastoral directors at the end of each half-term to show cumulative number of lates. Generate letters to parents, each half-term, for pupils who have 5 or more lates during that half-term.

Education Welfare Officer

- Promote partnerships between pupils, parents and school over attendance and punctuality;
- Monitor registers regularly for individuals causing concern (focus on targeted red group of pupils – see attached flow diagram);
- Attend weekly meetings with Attendance Clerk and Deputy Head Teacher;
- Liaise with Pastoral Directors and Attendance Clerk about referrals of long term absentees;
- Make home visits and feed back relevant information to school as required;
- Liaise with Deputy Head Teacher to pursue prosecution of parents for their child's non-attendance at school;
- Attend weekly Individual Needs meetings to share information on specific pupils with attendance issues.

Revised: March 2009 (Assistant Head teacher, Student Welfare)

Bromcom Attendance Codes

Mark/ ID	Type	Description
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
A	Present	Alternative lesson, e.g. Music/Youth
C	Other Authorised Circumstances	Present
E	Excluded	Authorised absence
H	Family Holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness	Not medical or dental Appointments
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late before registration closed	Present
M	Medical or dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence not covered by any other code or description	Unauthorised Absence
P	Approved Sporting Activity	Approved Educational Activity
R	Religious Observance	Authorised
V	Educational Visit or Trip	Present
W	Work Experience	Present