

Attendance Policy

2025 –26



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1. Introduction

West Lea School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which offers them the maximum opportunity to realise their potential. Missing learning time leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and it is well known that poor attendance leads to lower levels of achievement. The foundation of good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child beginning in the Early Years.

We believe that attendance is “everyone’s business” (DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024). Showing up each day, on time, “is learning for life”. Good attendance and punctuality add to our young people’s suitcase of skills that they can take into the adult world.

This policy is one of a series in West Lea’s safeguarding portfolio and should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy & Procedures. This policy is underpinned by a legal framework which guides all parties in the education of the children in our care.

The Education Act (1996) states:

“If a child of compulsory age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at his/her school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence”

2. School Responsibilities

- Promote and maintain good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (deemed as attendance below 90%) and severe absence (which is classed as attendance below 50%) School will take an attendance register twice a day and absences are recorded with a specific code depending on the type of absence
- The class teacher is responsible for taking the class register and passing on any concerns to the Campus Attendance Lead
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Keep accurate and efficient records of attendance, including attendance at all after school activities
- Involve parents/carers as far as possible
- Discuss attendance issues with the Attendance and Safeguarding Manager and refer to the Local Authority’s Education Welfare Service which has the statutory responsibility for attendance. This service can proceed towards prosecution (fine up to £2500/3 months imprisonment) or seek an Education Supervision Order
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance data responding to patterns and trends; attendance data is automatically shared daily with the DfE and the Local Authority
- The Senior Attendance Champion, Catherine Goodwin, also has responsibility for attendance and can, after a warning, seek to issue a Penalty Notice. All Penalty Notices will be reviewed on a case by case basis in consultation with the CEO and Attendance & Safeguarding Manager.
- Liaise with the Local Authority Passenger Transport Service regarding any pupil's attendance impacted by transport issues
- To adhere to the Local Authorities' processes around reduced timetables

- Closely monitor the attendance, and prioritise intervention for students who come under the following categories: students who have a social worker, or who have previously had a social worker, children who are looked after or cared for under Kindship Care arrangements, and students who come under the category of Pupil Premium (students eligible for free school meals or eligible over the previous 6 years, children previously looked after, students)

3. School Aims

- To work in partnership with pupils, parents, carers and the Educational Welfare Service to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly and that they are punctual in their attendance
- To reward pupils with good attendance and punctuality and believe that good habits formed early will contribute to life skills and future employability of our pupils
- To support those parents and pupils who have attendance or punctuality issues
- To involve outside agencies when the situation demands this intervention
- To challenge the behaviour of those parents/carers who do not prioritise this key area

4. Parent/Carer Responsibilities

- Encourage regular and punctual attendance being fully aware of their legal responsibilities
- Report absences on the first day a student is off school and any subsequent days
- Work in partnership with the school to solve any barriers to attendance
- Report any potential barriers to attendance to the school in a timely manner
- Ensure that their child arrives punctually
- Provide clear reasons for any absence which ensures the school can code the absence properly and accurately
- Contact the school on the first day of the child's absence as early as possible -preferably before the start of the school day (8.30am) and on any subsequent days of a child's absence
- If a parent/carers fails to notify the school why their child has not arrived on any given day, in line with Department of Education guidance, the school staff will call them. Should the school be unable to speak to a parent/carers, the school may also call emergency contacts and will take follow up action they consider to be commensurate to the situation
- Parents/carers should respond positively to any enquiry made by the school to ascertain the reason for any absence including any safeguarding matter
- Please note that legal action can be taken by the Local Authority in circumstances where excessive absence appears to be condoned or accepted
- Try to make medical and dental appointments outside of school time and provide necessary proof if during school time
- We do not permit leaves of absence in term time The Head of School may class some requests as "special circumstances" and authorise these absences, but these occasions will be rare and will only be granted to those who have good attendance. If your child needs to be off school for exceptional circumstances, you will need to fill out an Absence Request form
- Avoid using the following unacceptable reasons for an absence -shopping trips, helping to look after siblings, birthdays
- The school must be notified of any change of address or contact details
- Be aware that absence can only be authorised by the school

5. Attendance Support

We have a support structure in place at West Lea when attendance or punctuality becomes a concern. We will work with parents and carers to offer all the support we can at a school level. If our interventions are not successful, we will support families to seek the help they may need from external agencies such as Early Help, Children's Services or CAMHS.

You can always speak to the class team about concerns around attendance or you can discuss it directly with a member of our Attendance Team:

CAMPUS ATTENDANCE LEADS

Senior Attendance Champion – Catherine Goodwin, Head of Pastoral Development/Designated Safeguarding Lead

Safeguarding & Attendance Manager, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Kathryn White
Meridian Campus (Reception-KS2) – Emma Driver, Head of School

Haselbury (KS3) – Jennifer Tudor, Assistant Head Teacher

Learning for Life (KS4) – Julie Sullivan, Assistant Head Teacher

Horizon (Post 16) – Havva Ali, Assistant Head Teacher

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT Family Support Advisor (West Lea School) – Zuhre Omer

Education Welfare Officer (Enfield Education Welfare Service) – Rosana Hermosa

6. West Lea Attendance Process

DAILY BY THE CLASS TEACHER

- Teachers to record AM and PM registers by 9.15am. (10.15am for college students and 11am for WEX placements.)

DAILY BY OFFICE MANAGERS/ADMINISTRATORS

- From 8.00am: Office Managers/administrators (this is done by the receptionists) to take messages from attendance line & the School Gateway App and update SIMS.
- 9.30am: Office Managers to go through each class register, check that it's done and flag up any N (no reason given) and missing marks. Note in SIMS comments that a telephone call is being made.
- Pass names of 'N' marks to receptionists/administrators who will contact parents by phone.
- If parents cannot be contacted receptionists/ administrators will send the following attendance text to parents:

xxxxx has not arrived at school and we have not received notification that he/she is absent today. Please can you contact us as a matter of urgency as we are concerned about his/her whereabouts.

- Receptionist/Administrator update SIMS with outcome of telephone call
- Pupils with an 'N' mark discussed with Attendance Lead / Head of School / DSL regarding next steps and if home visit is required. Those with the highest safeguarding concerns will be risk-assessed by Campus Safeguarding Team/DSL and visited on the first day of absence with no contact.
- We will make contact on the first day of absence with the social worker of student's who are on Child Protection Plans or Child in Need Plans if we are unable to obtain a reason for absence or if the absence is concerning
- Home visits will be conducted on the second day of absence where we have not been able to make contact with a parent, carer or other family member.
- Students who arrive late should be recorded on SIMS by Receptionist/Administrator with an 'L' code including minutes late. Teachers should check that students have signed in with reception.
- Students who are 30 minutes late past registration (for Reception to KS4, registration closes at 9.15am) will be coded 'U'. A 'U' code is an unauthorised absence and will have a negative impact on your child's attendance

WEEKLY

- Registers are checked weekly by office administrators to check registers for previous week for any 'N' marks and missing marks. They may follow up with a phone call to obtain a reason for absence. Any concerns identified are escalated to the Safeguarding and Attendance Manager who will advise upon next steps.
- If we do not get a reason for absence the coding will be changed to an 'O' mark. Once response from parent received, the correct code is entered.

FORTNIGHTLY ATTENDANCE MONITORING

- Attendance meeting with Attendance & Safeguarding Manager, Office administrators Campus Attendance Lead (SLT) review attendance data and identify patterns and trends responding with the most appropriate intervention.

EWO VISIT - FORTNIGHTLY

- Attended by Attendance & Safeguarding Manager & Campus Attendance Lead
- Discussion of students of concern and attendance data across each campus to monitor and advise of action e.g. letters home, attendance clinics etc

Actions: If attendance is less than 95% and/or a concerning pattern of absence has been identified, e.g. student regularly taking off the same day of the week on a regular basis:

- Communication with family as directed by Campus Attendance Lead
- First Letter of Concern to be sent or a text message
- Second letter of concern to be sent if attendance does not improve (monitoring to be weekly); letter to state that no further days off for reasons of illness can be authorised without

supporting medical evidence (e.g. supporting letter from GP or Consultant), and to remind parent/carers of legal responsibility to ensure regular and punctual attendance of their child/ren

- If no significant improvement – discussion with EWO regarding next steps. Ongoing liaison with EWO regarding monitoring of students of concern.
- All actions to be recorded on the Attendance Monitoring Log on Sims and letters uploaded to each student’s SIMS page

MONTHLY INCLUSION MEETINGS

- Discussion of severely absent pupils at Inclusion meetings by Attendance Lead, including identification of holistic strategies to support child if underlying reasons identified for poor attendance e.g. anxiety.

7. Impact

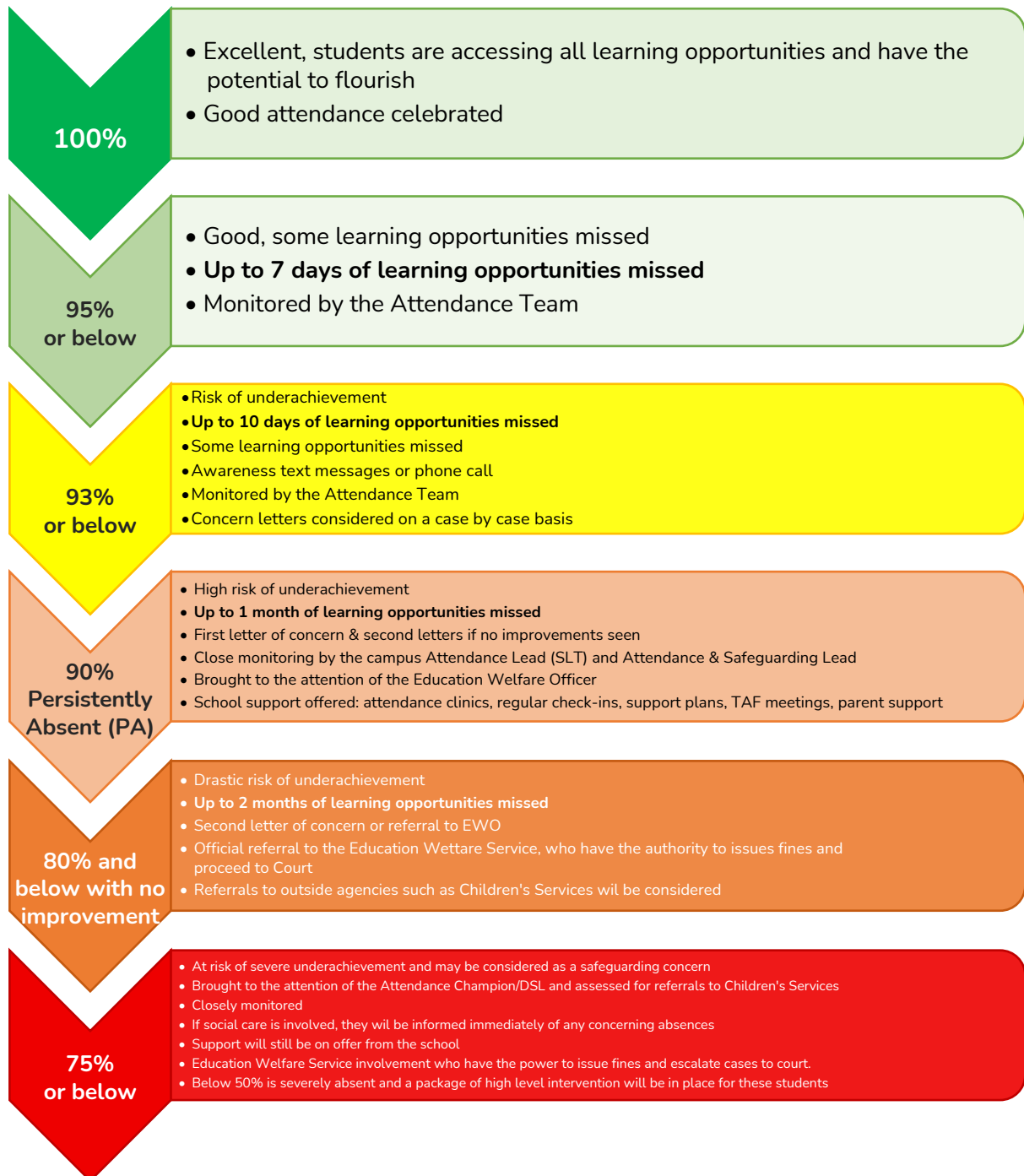
PUNCTUALITY

MINUTES LATE	DAYS LOST
5 minutes late everyday	3 days of learning lost
10 minutes late every day	6 days of learning lost
15 minutes late every day	10 days of learning lost
30 minutes late every day	19 days of learning lost

ATTENDANCE

ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGE	TIME MISSED OVER AN ACADEMIC YEAR
100%	No learning opportunities missed
98%	4 days, less than a week
90%	19 days, almost 4 weeks
85%	28.5 days, almost 6 weeks

8. Appendix 1 - attendance flow chart



Please note that this process only applies to students who have unauthorised absences (when the school does not agree that the reason given for absence means the student should remain off school). We will not escalate to the Education Welfare Service if absences are authorised for reasons such as illness.

9. Appendix 2 - school absence request form

Term time absences will only be authorised under exceptional circumstances.

*Term time absences can ONLY be authorized by the Executive Headteacher or your child/children's Head of School.

Any absence which has not been agreed in advance by the Head of School is marked as '**Unauthorised Absence**' and may result in a **Penalty Notice being issued (see back of form for details of this)**

Please note: If a child fails to attend school, You could be referred to the Education Welfare Service and be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court.

This school will not authorise the request for absence from school if your child's attendance is below 85%

Child 1 Campus..... Class.....

Child 2 Campus..... Class.....

Home Address

.....

Telephone Number (s).....

Date of Absence: From..... To.....

Reason for Absence:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Parent/Carer Name Signature

Date

*School Use Only

Current school attendance% Last academic yr attendance%

Is a personal discussion requested Y/N

All days authorised Y/N If No, please specify dates: Authorised Unauthorised.....

Name..... Signature..... Date.....

GUIDANCE

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 has been amended (as of 1 September 2013) to prohibit the proprietor (Headteacher) of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. The expectation is that term time holidays should not be planned or booked as a matter of course as they are likely to be **unauthorised** and may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice (fine).

The Headteacher will consider every request individually but the **following will not meet the criteria:**

- Relatives coming to visit
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad
- Family day trips
- Visiting family/friends; this may also include refusal to attend family weddings and visits to see family abroad.

Should you choose to take your child/children out of school during term-time and the absences are unauthorised we may make a request to the Local Authority to issue you with a Penalty Notice.

PENALTY NOTICES

Penalty Notices are issued to **each parent** of **each child**. The penalty is £80.00 if paid within 21 of the date of the notice. Payment after this time, but within 28 days of the date of notice automatically increases to £160.00

If you do not pay the Penalty Notice (within the 28 day time limit), the matter will be referred to the Magistrates court for prosecution under the provisions of Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 or Section 103 Education and Inspections Act 2006. Prosecution can result in a criminal conviction recorded against you. Courts have a wider range of sentencing options, which could include a maximum fine of up to £2500.

The only statutory defences to the offence under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 are:

- The child was absent for medical reasons.
- The Local Authority failed to provide transport when required to do so.
- The absences were due to religious observance.
- You had permission of the school or there was an unavoidable cause.

There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

Legislative Framework for Education Penalty Notices.

Education Act 1996.

Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.

Children Act 1989.

Education and Inspections Act 2006.



community
kindness
learning for life
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