

West Park

'A caring school where we put pupils and their achievement first'



Attendance Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

Punctuality and good attendance are essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills which will equip them for life.

West Park school aims to achieve good pupil attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils and parents can work in partnership. Monitoring attendance will help us to identify pupils at risk.

Tutors and Year Heads will actively encourage good attendance and liaise with home and other agencies as appropriate.

Good attendance is regarded as positive achievement and will be recognised and celebrated.

AIMS

- To create a culture of regular attendance.
- To demonstrate to pupils, parents and staff that good attendance is valued.
- To make explicit for pupils, parents and staff the link between levels of achievement and regular attendance.
- To use data on attendance to support the monitoring of individuals and groups of pupils.
- To use data on attendance in discussions with pupils and parents regarding attitude and attainment.
- To recognise and support the key role of form tutors in monitoring and promoting good attendance.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Pupil

- To attend school regularly and on time (*from the Agreement*).
- To ensure that written communications between home and school are delivered promptly.

Parent

- To ensure that (*name*) goes to school regularly, on time and properly equipped (*from the Agreement*).
- To provide prior notification of absence where possible.
- To contact school on the first day of absence.
- To provide written explanation of absence on the day of return to school.
- To avoid absence through family holiday arrangements.
- To inform school of any change to contact numbers/addresses.

Tutor

- To complete attendance registers punctually and to the correct procedure.
- To pick up patterns of absence by individuals and groups.
- To be aware of warning signs (lateness, feeling ill, anxiety about work or bullying).
- To apply initial sanctions as appropriate for lateness or truancy.
- To refer concerns promptly to the Year Head.

Year Head

- To reward excellence and improvement in line with school policy.
- To maintain and regularly analyse data on attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure that tutors regularly have sufficient information to monitor the attendance of individuals and groups of pupils.
- To devise strategies for improving attendance by working with individuals and groups of pupils.
- To constantly seek to improve the efficiency of systems and procedures.
- To let parents know about any concerns regarding standards of work, behaviour, attendance, punctuality (*from the Agreement*).
- To liaise with Attendance Officer.

Attendance Officer

- To hold a fortnightly review with each Year Head.
- To provide immediate follow-up of referrals and subsequent feedback.
- To act on Attendance Indicators.
- To refer to LA Education Welfare for legal action as appropriate where serious attendance problems occur.
- To have an overview of school attendance.
- To ensure the Pastoral Head is provided with reports on attendance.

Head

- To have an overview of school attendance and its impact on school performance.
- To ensure Governors are provided with reports on attendance.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY

1. Inform school of absence on first day - reason and possible length.
2. On child's return to school - send a written note to confirm reason and length of absence. Absence from school should only be for "authorised" reasons

SCHOOLS' RESPONSIBILITY

1. If a pupil is absent, a call or text will be sent home, if no information has been received prior to the absence.
2. If an acceptable reason is given, the absence will be authorised.
3. If no response is received, reception team will attempt to contact home.
4. When a pupil is absent for 3 days and no reason from home has been received the school attendance officer will conduct a home visit.

SERIOUS ATTENDANCE PROBLEM CHILDREN

1. Involvement of School Attendance Officer - warning letter from school and liaison with other agencies as appropriate.
2. Further action by LA Welfare Service (prosecution).

FURTHER POINTS

At the discretion of Year Heads/Attendance Officer any child who is absent for 20 x ½ days in any half term should have their attendance/reasons for absence discussed with parents in school. Parents must be able to justify this level of absence under the attendance regulations. Attendance is monitored daily by Form Tutors and Year Heads.

EXEATS

No pupil will be allowed to leave the school premises during the day without a formal exit permit being issued.

These should only be requested for necessary reasons (e.g. dentist/hospital/ doctor etc) and must be requested in advance in writing by the parent/ guardian. The Form Tutor should then issue a pass, dated and timed, so that the pupil can sign out at one of the reception offices at the appropriate time.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING ATTENDANCE

- Effective maintenance of registers.
- Careful monitoring of the attendance of individual pupils.
- Effective and swift follow-up action.
- High expectations from all members of the school community in promoting good attendance.
- Collecting and publicising data within the school.
- Following up absent pupils – giving support, guidance, counselling.
- Awarding certificates for punctuality and attendance.
- Recording attendance on reports sent home, with positive comments for effort.
- Including attendance – related matters in the induction programme for all new staff and in particular for NQTs.
- Setting attainment goals for individuals or class or year groups.
- Welcoming pupils back after illness.
- Taking specific measure to ease pupils back into school after protracted absences.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

School attendance and requests for Leave of Absence during Term Time

Regarding Headteachers responsibilities from September 2013 with regard to parents requesting leave of absence during the academic year. Just to remind parents of the DfE positions again; from September 2013 Head teacher should not authorise any absence due to leave of absence, unless there are 'exceptional circumstances' present.

'The DfE have removed from the attendance regulations the ability of Head teachers to authorise up to 10 days absence and it is not a right of parents to demand 10 days of authorised absence either.'

Examples of exceptional circumstances:

- Significant family bereavement, i.e. Mother (stepmother), Father (stepfather) principle carers or sibling.
- Significant family illness to Mothers (stepmother), Father (stepfather), sibling or principle carer.
- Disclosure of significant abuse where a short leave of absence may be beneficial to recover.
- Involvement in court proceedings, either in the family courts or in criminal proceedings.

- Parents who are in the military/police force and other areas of work where leave of absence can only be taken at certain points in the year.

It is good practice to ask for evidence from families where any of the above may be present in a request in order to make a decision as to whether to authorise. The onus is always on the parents to provide evidence to support applications for leave of absence.

Family requests for holidays for family weddings or to see relatives are not deemed to be exceptional circumstances. The availability of cheap flights or holidays are also not deemed to be exceptional circumstances (DfE guidance).