The Weald

community school and sixth form

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved by [Committee/FGB] on	25th September 2023
Next review date:	September 2025
Signed by [Chair of Governors/Chair of Committee]:	

Attendance policy

The Weald School and Sixth Form

Date adopted by governing body	25th September 2023
Date of review	September 2025

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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 Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day except for unavoidable medical related problems

- Attend every timetabled session on time

3.2 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 in the pastoral committee

- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.3 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy

- 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

3.4 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 Richard Brimacombe and can be contacted via rbrimacombe@theweald.org.uk

3.5 The family liaison officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Discuss overall attendance patterns and individual concerns with the senior leader

responsible for attendance, using weekly monthly and half termly analysis to send out attendance letters of concern (90-95%) or action learning mentor support (less than 90%) in consultation with attendance learning mentor

- Discuss student concerns with HoH and set up a "concern list" for more daily monitoring

- When a student reaches below 90% attendance discuss with line manager whether to present a case file to student entitlement for referral and action

- Attend any meetings as part of a referral to a student entitlement and work pro actively and positively with outside agencies

- Run off a report on PPG absentees and share with HoH

- Ensure the attendance letters and SAAP plans are drawn up and saved correctly

- Draw up the data and submit the returns for the reports to Local Authority

- Liaise with SENCO re returns for data requests for vulnerable groups' attendance

- Ensure Heads of House implement all aspects of the attendance policy/procedure

- Discuss the attendance with each Head of House and identify students causing concern, ensure they have action plans in place

- Monitor whole school attendance and implement the analysis of year groups and learner groups as per the frequent monitoring strategies

- Discuss intervention with the SLT lead and ensure recommendations are implemented

- Ensure Heads of House follow up the referrals for students below 90%

- Share attendance targets and progress from analysis with Heads of House

- Ensure rewards for high / full attendance are initiated and given out promptly

- Ensure the statutory returns are completed and checked by the SLT lead

- Be aware and spot anomalies in the registers or attendance patterns

- Liaise with relevant administrative and technical staff to ensure SIMS Lesson Monitor is effective and functional, recommend and implement training as required to maximise its potential

3.6 Heads of house

- Take immediate safeguarding actions should any child be missing during the school day and there is an inability to contact parent/carers. These steps may involve calling the Police and making an IFD referral

- Follow up short term absences with Form Tutor, for those on a concern list follow up directly on the first day of absence by phoning home

- Check and follow up any missing codes due to alternative curriculum provision

- Raise attendance progress and individual concerns with tutor team in morning briefings

- Follow up any student missing during the school day and ensure unexplained reasons are documented or sanctioned

- Ensure students returning from a sustained period of absence are seen. Students requiring reintegration to have a plan in place with appropriate support in liaison with the SENCO

- Refer to attendance in House assemblies, celebrate and promote awards for high/ full attendance

- Assist and mentor new form tutors in registration and attendance procedures

- Monitor punctuality of students and set up lateness reports as required

- Plan with the FLO and line manager the intervention required as part of all of the above and also the half termly pastoral monitoring. Ensure intervention is put in place and impact is measured

- Where students are following personalised timetables ensure the coding on their timetable is correct so that it can be printed and stuck in their planner for accuracy

3.7 Form tutors

Form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis

- Ensure all attendance issues are dealt with during the registration period.

- Complete registers accurately. Take the register promptly. Any students arriving after the register has been taken are marked as late. Save the register at 9:10am and close

- Be aware of the weekly attendance pattern for individual students and look for patterns of non-attendance or lateness and raise concerns regarding students with the Head of House

- Promote high attendance with the form group, celebrate it within the form and address issues with restorative practice language

- Review the weekly patterns of the form with HoH in fortnightly briefings and support with information and intervention as required

- Update records when a note or letter is brought in, ensure students are seen after a longer period of absence by FT/HoH for a back to school interview

3.8 Student reception staff

Student reception staff will:

- Alert the DSL team should any student be missing during the school day and there has been either no contact from the parent/carer or there is an inability to be able to contact the parent/carer

- Ensure the registers are completed and checked every day, return report to SLT Lead for intervention as required

- Retrieve and record all absence line messages and phone messages related to absence, send out Truancy call. Record and save all replies to ensure registers are accurate.

- Provide the code reports for checking every fortnight

3.9 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time

- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return

- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child

Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day but if unavoidable, ensure these are scheduled for the afternoon to minimise lost learning time

3.10 SENDCO

- SENDCO to ensure they gather information on attendance issues from Head of House when IBPs/IEPs/PSPs are set up

- To support students who are being reintegrated into school/lessons. The reintegration will be set up and monitored by the Head of House

3.11 Learning mentor

- To share information as part of Learning Mentor role which relates to attendance

To work with the Head of House or SENCO as appropriate as part of any reintegration package for a student returning from a period of absence

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry

- The amended entry

- The reason for the amendment

- The date on which the amendment was made

- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

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 **8:43am** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken by 8:50am and will be kept open until 9:10am

The register for the second session will be taken at **Midday** and will be kept open until **12:10pm**

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 **8:30am** or as soon as practically possible by calling the school absence line or emailing absence@theweald.org.uk (see also section 7).

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt or **the absence lasts for more than three days,** 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.

Parents should inform the school in advance by emailing absence@theweald.org.uk and attaching evidence such as an appointment card or letter.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, we kindly ask that appointments are scheduled in the afternoon after 1:30pm to minimise the impact on learning.

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 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

- Will sign in at main reception and give a reason for their lateness. The lateness will be followed up with a breaktime detention

- For frequent lateness, the school will firstly make parent/carers aware with a warning letter. Should lateness issues persist following the issue of a warning letter then the school will consider issuing a fixed penalty notice in line with the guidance issued by Pupil Entitlement Investigations. A copy of the current guidance is available here

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:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the Police and refer to Children's Services as per our Safeguarding Policy

- Identify whether the absence is approved or not

- 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

- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through progress tracking reports.

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.

Exceptional circumstances are one off events which are unavoidable, examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance.

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 four weeks before the absence. Requests should be made by the parent/carer in writing directly to the headteacher using a request for leave form which is available from student reception or the child's head of house.

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

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 notice6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The Weald School rewards high or full attendance in the following ways: • Termly 100% attendance certificates and recognition in main assembly and through Houses

- 95% or higher attendance is a condition of a termly Weald Community Award • All attendance certificates gain 5 additional house points per student to the house total

- Students with 100% attendance each term are placed in a lottery for a reward. •

Fortnightly tutor group awards for highest attendance

6. Attendance monitoring

6.1 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.

6.2 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

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors, heads of house, heads of year

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

6.4 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:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

- Create action plans to improve attendance

- 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 and advise of future possible legal action

- Provide access to wider support services such as Early Help to remove the barriers to attendance

- Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention

- Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through children's services

Parents/carers will:

- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance

- Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Assistant Head teacher responsible for attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

● Child protection and safeguarding policy

● Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code Definition Scenario

/ Present (am) Pupil is present at morning registration

\ Present (pm) Pupil is present at afternoon registration

L Late arrival Pupil arrives late before register has closed

B Off-site educational activity Pupil is at a supervised off-site
educational activity approved by the school

D Dual registered Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also
registered

J Interview Pupil has an interview with a
prospective employer/educational
establishment

P Sporting activity Pupil is participating in a supervised
sporting activity approved by the school

V Educational trip or visit Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or
approved, by the school

W Work experience Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code Definition Scenario

Authorised absence

C Authorised leave of absence Pupil has been granted a leave of
absence due to exceptional circumstances

E Excluded Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

H Authorised holiday Pupil has been allowed to go on
holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I Illness School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M Medical/dental appointment Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R Religious observance Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

S Study leave Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations

T Gypsy, Roma and traveler absence Pupil from a traveller community is travelling,
as agreed with the school

Unauthorised absence

G Unauthorised holiday Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school

Pupil is absent for an unknown reason

N Reason not provided   the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has (this code should be amended when been provided after a reasonable amount of time)

O Unauthorised absence   School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence

U Arrival after registration   Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code Definition Scenario

X Not required to be in school   Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

Y 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

Z Pupil not on admission register   Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school

Planned school closure   Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day