



# **Westcliff High School for Boys**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**New Policy:** *(Replaces Pupil Leave of  
Absence Policy)*

**COMMITTEE:**

**PSC**

**DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:** **Summer 2027**

## 1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure 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 is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

### 3.1 The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers

- Making sure the School fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - Making sure the School records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
  - Making sure the School works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the School's policies and ethos
- Making sure the School's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the School has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and evaluating the effectiveness of the School's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - The School's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The School's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools

### **3.2 The Headmaster**

The Headmaster is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- 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 he deems it necessary, and/or authorising others to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND.
- Communicating with the Local Authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance
- Communicating the School's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels

- Sharing information from the School register with the Local Authority, including:
  - Notifying the Local Authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the School admission register outside of standard transition times
  - Providing the Local Authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
  - Providing the Local Authority with the details of pupils who the School believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The three Pastoral Senior Leaders are responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across their division of the School
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance are Miss G Fairfax (Third Deputy Head), Mr W Williams (First Deputy Head), Mr A Dean (Senior Master Sixth Form). They can be contacted via the respective Pastoral Office.

### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The School attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to School staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated Senior Leaders responsible for attendance, and the Headmaster
- Working with others to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headmaster regarding fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mr M Manning and can be contacted via [office@whsb.essex.sch.uk](mailto:office@whsb.essex.sch.uk).

### **3.5 Form Tutors**

Form Tutors are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information using the School's processes.

### **3.6 Parents**

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the School and/or Local Authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every school day on time
- Call the school to report their child's sickness absence before 9.00am 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 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, medical appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### **3.7 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to attend every timetabled session, on time

## **4. Recording Attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an electronic 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, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024:

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where 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 six years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.40am and ends at 3.35pm.

Pupils must arrive in School by 8.35am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.50pm.

## **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent must notify the School of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the relevant Pastoral Office.

Where it feels it necessary the School will ask for 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 will be notified.

## **4.3 Planned absence**

Parents must write to the Headmaster in advance to request leave of absence for appointments, such as dental, hospital etc.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of School for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence (ordinarily no less than a month). Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the School may authorise.

## **4.4 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 on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- 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
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the School will consider involving the Local Authority
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: consider issuing a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention as appropriate.

## **4.5 Reporting to parents**

The School will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via School Reports and attendance letters (if appropriate).

# **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

## **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

The Headmaster may allow pupils to be absent from the School site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Headmaster will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. Parents are also reminded that only the School may authorize absence; parents do not enjoy rights in this regard.

A leave of absence is granted at the Headmaster's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, leave of absence will not be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. In our experience, time lost on such occasions is not easily made up.

The School considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Where leave of absence is being considered, requests, giving at least one month's notice, should be addressed, in the first instance, to the appropriate Progress Leader. The Headmaster may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. Replies will come in the form of a standard card and will be based on the evidence provided. We regret that we are not able to enter protracted exchanges on individual circumstances.

Where the School feels that a pupil is being withdrawn without proper justification then the pupil's absence will be deemed unauthorized and the appropriate Authorities will normally be notified.

## **5.2 Sanctions**

The School will make use of the full range of potential sanctions including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

### **Penalty notices**

The Headmaster (or someone authorised by him), Local Authority or the Police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the School issues a penalty notice, it will check with the Local Authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the School will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the School has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during School hours without reasonable justification, during the first five days of a suspension or exclusion (where the School has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

### **Notices to improve**

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the School may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the Local Authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance does not improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between three and six weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

## **6. Attendance Monitoring**

### **6.1 Monitoring attendance**

The School will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) regularly at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE as appropriate.



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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.

## **6.2 Analysing attendance**

The School will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- 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:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, Local Authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

## **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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the School's strategy for improving attendance.

The School will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold meetings with the parents of pupils who the School (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:

- Discuss attendance and engagement at School
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the Local Authority, where relevant
  - Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the School will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
  - Implement sanctions and other measures it deems appropriate, where necessary.

## **7. Monitoring Arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed every two years and/or when national regulations are amended.

## **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
<b>/</b>	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
<b>\</b>	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
<b>L</b>	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
<b>K</b>	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
<b>V</b>	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
<b>P</b>	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>W</b>	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
<b>B</b>	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
<b>C1</b>	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>J1</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

<b>S</b>	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>C2</b>	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency

<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	<p>Pupil is unable to attend as they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered

#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays
---	------------------------------	--