



Weston Schools Federation

Attendance Policy

Date of last review: January 2022

Date of next review: January 2023



Vision

Weston Shore Infant School and Weston Park Primary School recognise that good attendance is key to good pupil outcomes. The links between regular attendance, reaching potential attainment and future life opportunities are well researched. For this reason the schools will encourage good attendance and be robust in monitoring attendance and take action when attendance fails.

Absence can be a symptom of:

- Wider Safeguarding issues – domestic violence, hidden harm etc.
- Low aspirations and or/disaffection
- Generational trend
- Economic climate
- Health or medical needs
- Lack of regard of the importance of regular attendance

Aims

- To maximise our attendance rates across our schools by encouraging, recognising and rewarding good attendance.
- To investigate individual absences and ensure that pupils and parents/carers are clear that unauthorised absences are not acceptable.
- To work closely with pupils and parents, along with other professional agencies, to help them overcome problems which prevent students from attending school regularly.

The Legal Framework

- Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that children attend and stay at school. It is the responsibility of the school to support attendance and to take problems seriously which may lead to non-attendance.
- Penalty Notices may be issued under the Local Authority's (LA) Code of Conduct for the use of Penalty Notices in Cases of Non-Attendance at school. A copy of this Code of Conduct can be obtained from the Attendance Officer or the Education Welfare Service.

Monitoring approach to Attendance

Attendance is checked on a twice daily basis. Parents/carers of pupils who are absent without explanation will be contacted mid-morning by the School Office, this will be via phone call, text, email and Facebook Messenger. If contact is unable to be made a voicemail will be left asking for Parent/carer to make contact on the number provided. Parents/carer should expect to be contacted on the first day of their child's absence.

If contact is unable to be made, a letter will be sent home with the child upon their return to school. The letter will outline the absence and that contact was unable to be made, reason for absence must be completed and sent back into school.

Parents should endeavour to arrange non-urgent medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is not possible and the child has a medical appointment during the school day, (GP, hospital, dental, optician, CAMHS, school nurse referral), parent/carer will be asked to provide evidence of the absence; this could be by means of a letter,

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confirmation from the Reception, prescription or a screenshot of the electronic system that GP surgeries now use. This needs to show the date and time of the appointment along with the name. Paper copies of the evidence will be photocopied and scanned and added to the child's file.

The authorisation of any absence is at the School's discretion. If a pupil is regularly absent due to illness, the school reserves the right not to authorise the absence and to request medical evidence. With parent/carer's permission, the school may also contact the pupil's GP.

In the case of those pupils whose level of attendance is causing concern, the school's Attendance Officer will send home letters and a copy of their child's attendance record to date. In some cases, the school may ask to meet with parents and place the child on an Attendance Plan. The family may also be referred to Early Help for additional support if necessary.

All unauthorised absence will put parents at risk of being issued with a Penalty Notice, or of legal proceedings being issued with a Penalty Notice, or of legal proceedings being instigated for failing to ensure their child's attendance at school.

Strategies to Encourage Good Attendance

We believe that pupils who do achieve good attendance should be recognised and rewarded; thus providing them with positive reinforcement and providing other pupils further incentives to improve their attendance.

Rewards are issued for both excellent attendance and improved attendance. This is done on a weekly and half termly basis for individuals. Recognition for this is made by:

- Certificates
- Badges for children to keep.
- Individual names in the newsletter
- Personal congratulations from the Attendance Officer or other members of Senior Leadership Team.

Prizes are also given to the children for 100% attendance for the whole academic year.

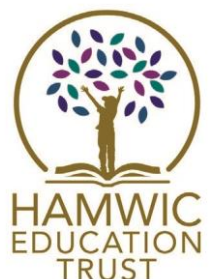
Positive messages about good attendance are always delivered in class time and assemblies. An attendance board is kept up to date each week with each year group's attendance, parents/carers and pupil's can easily identify the year group who have achieved the highest percentage attendance for the previous week. Attendance data is always available from the Attendance officer or school office.

Parent's Responsibilities

- Parents/carers are under a legal duty to send their children to school regularly. In June 2017 the Supreme Court delivered judgment in relation to the Isle of Wight council's appeal which sought clarification on what is meant by 'fails to attend regularly' in the context of a prosecution for un-authorised non-attendance at school. The Supreme Court said that 'regular' means 'in accordance with the rules published by the school' and rejected the view that regular meant 'sufficiently frequently'. The rules of the school can be viewed in our School Attendance Leaflet: A Guide to Attendance at School.

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- It is the Parent/carer's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence as soon as possible on the day of absence.
- Parental/carer contact should be made by either telephone, email, Facebook Messenger or in person on each day of absence.
- Parent/carer should resolve any in-school problems with the appropriate member of Teaching Staff or Head Teacher without any adverse effect on attendance.
- If no Parental/carer contact is made on the day(s) of absence, parents/carer should personally contact the School office on the child's return to school.
- Parent/carer should discuss any problems with the school at the earliest opportunity so that parent/carers and staff can work together to address them.
- For absence from school for a medical appointment, Parent/carer must provide the letter or text message detailing the appointment.
- Our School website, newsletters and occasional letters provide the parents with details of our expectations.

Interventions to Address Poor Attendance

Staff across Weston Shore and Weston Park employ a range of strategies to address the problems of pupils who have unacceptably low levels of attendance and to identify those at risk. In school, the Attendance Officer, who is responsible for attendance, keeps detailed records of concerns and will regularly analyse the data. Records show the routes of intervention, early intervention is the key. Strategies for this intervention include telephone calls, letters home, meetings with parents in school, collection of children to ensure they are in school. Parent/carers will automatically be contacted by the school if their child's attendance starts to fall.

Where the non-attendance of a pupil is not solved or improved by the Attendance plans, we will refer to the Local Authority (LA) who will seek legal advice and may pursue legal action to enforce attendance through the courts.

Where there have been issues of long term absence we also work closely with the Attendance Officer and parent/carers to ensure the pupil is re-integrated back into school.

The Local Authority convenes annual attendance conferences and network meetings and is working closely with the Health Service professionals to improve attendance across the city.

Legal Interventions

Fixed Penalty Notices

Fixed Penalty Notices were brought in by Southampton LA in September 2005 as an alternative to prosecution. All pupils who have 10 instances of unauthorised attendance (ie 5 days) may be liable.

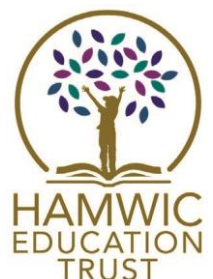
A full copy of the Local Authorities Code of Conduct for the use of Penalty Notices in Cases of Non-Attendance at school can be obtained from the school.

The Importance of Registration and Punctuality

It is essential that the registers are accurate and secure.

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The school opens at 8.45am, registration is from 8.45am till 9am. All schools must keep an attendance register in which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, students are marked present or absent.

The doors to classes will close at 9am, pupils arriving after 9am will be required to sign in at the School office and attendance will be marked with an 'L' code with a reason given. Parent/carers will be advised that a packed lunch is required for the child. Class teachers should only enter a pupil as present '/' or absent 'N' code.

Pupils who arrive after 9.30am must also sign in at the office and be recorded as late with a 'U' code entered, again the number of minutes late will be entered along with a reason for the late attendance in comments, and Parent/carer will be advised that a packed lunch is required for the child.

Persistent lateness will result in strategies to address the lateness; initially via an Attendance plan and consequently persistent lateness also places parents at risk of a Penalty Notice being issued.

Leave of Absence

We will not automatically authorise requests for leave of absence. **There is not an automatic entitlement for any family holiday or leave of absence during term time.**

The Head Teacher will consider each request on its merits **but will usually only agree to leave in exceptional circumstances.** The most important considerations are:

- Whether the leave of absence could be taken during periods of normal school holiday
- Whether due consideration has been given to the timing of the leave of absence, e.g. at the start of a new term
- The pupil's current level of attendance
- No authorised absence will be given during SAT's periods, this will include all siblings within the family

Parent/carers must apply in writing to the Head Teacher at least three weeks in advance of the planned leave of absence. An application form is available from the school office which, once considered, will be returned to the parent/carer indicating whether or not the period of leave has been agreed. Parent/carers may be asked to come into school to meet with members of staff before a final decision is made.

In cases where overseas travel has been booked in advance of a request, the school may request sight of the travel documentation and where no return travel arrangements have been made, the student maybe removed from the school roll on the last day of their attendance.

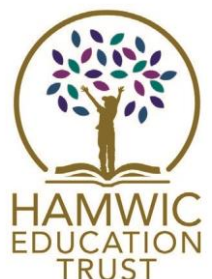
When a leave of absence is requested for siblings in different schools parents should be aware that schools will liaise prior to a decision being made for any leave of absence requests.

Any requests for leave of absence that have not been agreed by the school, but are subsequently taken will put parents at risk of a Penalty Notice or prosecution.

In cases where a leave of absence request is declined the school will enter a 'G' code in the register which will denote an unauthorised absence.

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An offence occurs if a parent/carer fails to secure a child's regular attendance at the school at which they are a registered pupil, of compulsory school age and that absence is not authorised by the school.

The issuing of a Penalty Notice may be considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

Failure by a parent/carer to ensure the child is not in a public place whilst being excluded from school on more than one occasion.

Unauthorised Absence of 10 or more sessions (5 school days) a singular or combination of the following codes),U and G during any 80 possible school sessions (8 school weeks). These do not need to be consecutive days. Southampton City Council will review each penalty notice request but will use its discretion for each case.

Unauthorised Leave of Absence of 10 or more consecutive school sessions (G code only) within the academic year.

In addition where a parent with whom the pupil normally resides has not made a prior application for a leave of absence and there are no exceptional circumstances that warrant the granting of a leave of absence in those particular circumstances. A Penalty Notice will not be issued unless the unauthorised leave of absence is at least 10 sessions (5 school days) consecutively. The Council will ignore any half term school holiday and any end of term school holiday in the calculation of consecutiveness so that if the unauthorised absence occurs before and after a half term or end of term, this will be regarded as consecutive.

Late arrival, after the close of registration, on 10 occasions or more during any 80 possible school sessions (8 school weeks).

School registers will be closed after the registration period in accordance with the School Attendance Policy. A 'U' code will then be used which will denote an unauthorised absence.

If a parent/carer has phoned their child in absent due to sickness, the parent is responsible that their child will remain at home during school hours, unless visiting the Doctor's surgery.

Attendance Officer Referrals

Schools work closely with the Attendance Officer to support pupils whose attendance is causing concern. This includes the re-integration into school of pupils with long term absence. The Attendance Lead and Attendance Officers may instigate home visits and, therefore, will be able to assess the pupil's problems in the wider family context, offering advice and solutions where possible.

School Attendance Policy

This policy is monitored as a matter of course by those responsible for its day to day operation and is reviewed periodically. **Copies of School Attendance Matters: A Guide to Attendance at School** and the **Local Authority Code of Conduct for the use of Penalty Notices** can be obtained from the school.

Criteria for Success

- Attendance rate increases
- Authorised absence rate decreases
- Unauthorised absence rate decreases

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- Improvement in individual's attendance.

SCHOOL SPECIFICS

	Weston Shore Infants	Weston Park Park
Attendance Lead	Vanessa Ridler	
Attendance Officers	Lucy Sketcher	Natasha Coleman
Registration begins	8.45am	
Present mark given until	9.00am	
Late mark given between	9.00am-9.30am	
U code, un-authorised absence, applied after	9.30am	

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Signed Chair of Governing Body:

[date]

Signed Headteacher:

[date]

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