



## Attendance Policy

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<b>Document Author:</b>	<b>Kerry Williams</b>
<b>Document Owner:</b>	<b>Trustees</b>
<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>Trustees</b>

## Contents

1. Aims .....	3
2. Legislation and guidance .....	3
3. School procedures .....	3
4. Authorised and unauthorised absence .....	4
5. Strategies for promoting attendance .....	5
6. Roles and responsibilities .....	5
7. Monitoring arrangements .....	6
8. Links with other policies .....	6
Appendix 1 - Attendance procedure .....	7
Appendix 2: Attendance codes .....	8

## 1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every student has access to appropriate provision which has been agreed by the referring schools and WASP.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

WASP understand that some of our students will have had attendance issues in their previous school. We will endeavor to provide a fresh start for students upon arriving at WASP and aim to continuously monitor and address concerns at the earliest opportunity.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [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. School procedures

### 3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all students are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student 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 2 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

### **3.2 Unplanned absence**

In line with the arranged provision, there is an expectation that parents will notify WASP on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by **9:30am**.

Parents are to call the main office on 01722 786138 to inform a member of staff of any unplanned absence.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

### **3.3 Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

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

Parents are to call the main office on 01722 786138 to inform a member of staff of any scheduled medical appointments.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

### **3.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A student who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code 'L'.

A student who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as such, using the appropriate code 'U'.

In the event of persistent lateness, a letter will be sent to parents informing them of students failing to arrive at school on time. If the problem persists, parents will be asked in to school for a parent-school meeting to discuss reasons for lateness, if this has not already been done so by the referring school.

### **3.5 Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. Where the student is on roll at the referring school, WASP will liaise with the referring school as per the attendance procedure stated in section 6 of this policy.

### **3.6 Reporting to parents**

Student attendance information will be shared with parents in the end of term student reports (six times per year), unless an attendance concern arises prior to this report date. Attendance reports will also be shared as part of School Attendance Meetings, see section 6.

## **4. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence**

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as occasions where we accept that it would be extremely difficult, unpractical, or unreasonable for the student to attend school due to events out of their control.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student’s parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students 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 student is attending educational provision
- Study leave – study leave is not granted by default and is only granted to students in year 11 during the examination term, at the discretion of the Headteacher. Provision will still be made available for students who wish to revise in school

## **4.2 Legal sanctions**

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay in accordance with present LA guidelines. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice rests with the headteacher, following the local authority’s code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may consider:

- 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 student 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

## **5. Strategies for promoting attendance**

WASP value consistent and punctual attendance by all students, and reward accordingly at the end of each term.

Students may be rewarded with chocolate and gift cards for improving their attendance or having zero absence in the term.

Students will be encouraged to improve poor attendance by keeping them informed of their attendance scores and offering support and advice on getting to school.

In exceptional circumstances, including whereby a safeguarding issue is preventing a student accessing school, WASP may offer alternative travel funding such as a private taxi.

## **6. Roles and responsibilities**

### **6.1 The board of trustees**

The trust board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **6.2 The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to trustees.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **6.3 The attendance officer / DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead)**

The attendance officer / DSL:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual student level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Assists with referring schools on all matters relating to attendance

## **6.5 Reception staff**

Reception staff are expected to:

- take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system
- contact parents to establish reasons for absence
- respond to any attendance queries from referring schools regarding students on their roll
- inform the DSL on the second day of unexplained absence that there has been no contact from parents

## **7. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the board of trustees.

## **8. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy

## Appendix 1 - Attendance procedure

Day of Unexplained Absence	Action	Person Responsible
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If a student fails to arrive to school, a telephone call will be made 30 minutes after the start of the first lesson letting parents know their child has not arrived.</li> <li>If no reason has been received by lesson 2, all reasonable efforts should be made to contact parents and relatives to establish a reason for absence and the whereabouts of the student.</li> <li>Reasons and relevant absence codes are to be recorded on the attendance system as soon as a parent has made contact.</li> </ul>	WASP Centre Pastoral Managers
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further calls are to be placed to parents 30 minutes after the start of the school day. If there has still been no parental contact, then WASP is to conduct a home visit to the address. If a parent is not present at the address, then a note is to be left asking the parent to contact WASP as a matter of urgency.</li> </ul>	WASP Centre Designated Safeguarding Lead
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If there are still concerns regarding the absence and wellbeing of a student and no contact has been established with parents, a safeguarding concern form is to be completed by the WASP Centre Admin Manager.</li> <li>If the student is on roll at WASP, this will be dealt with in accordance with the WASP Safeguarding policy by the DSL.</li> <li>If the student is dual rolled, the DSL will pass the concern to the referring school and explain fully the concerns relating to the student and the efforts made.</li> <li>Consideration must be given to inviting parents to a School Attendance Meeting to address concerns*.</li> </ul>	WASP Centre Admin Manager / Designated Safeguarding Lead
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WASP will continue to establish contact with parents using reasonable means at communication.</li> </ul>	WASP Centre Pastoral Managers
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WASP will continue to establish contact with parents using reasonable means at communication.</li> <li>On day 5, WASP will follow local Child Missing in Education guidance to inform the local authority (see 6.2)</li> <li>Dual registered students - WASP will liaise with referring schools regarding a previous highlighted attendance and welfare concern and assist with any actions as appropriate.</li> </ul>	Designated Safeguarding Lead

**\*If attendance continues to deteriorate, or reasons for absence are not authorised, then the school which the student is on roll has the responsibility to hold a School Attendance Meeting to address concerns and if necessary, refer into the Education Welfare Service.**

### Children missing from School

WASP will liaise with the student's referring school to provide the local authority with the details of students who fail to attend regularly or have 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence (5 school days).

For students on roll at WASP, this will be completed by WASP.

In the event of long term unauthorised absence, a multi agency meeting will be called and a referral may be made to the Education Welfare Service.

Patterns of absence should be considered in the light of information from the WASP Safeguarding policy. Students missing from school are in danger of exploitation and abuse and this risk must be assessed and addressed.

## Appendix 2: Attendance codes

/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 Student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed
X	Not required to be in school	Student 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 Student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day