



**Policy** Attendance

**School Motto**

Dream, believe, achieve together.

**Persons with Responsibility**

Governors

Family Liaison Officer

Sara Walker

All staff

**Linked Policies**

Equal Opportunities

Child Protection

**Next Review:** July 2023

Westwood Park is an inclusive school. All policies should be seen in the light of overcoming barriers to learning for example: dyslexia, dyspraxia, ASD, emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties.

## **Introduction**

Children learn from an early age. Within education it is vital that one point they learn early on is that '**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MATTERS**'.

School attendance is compulsory for all children between 5 and 18 years of age. They need to be in school regularly, not only to achieve their full potential both academically and socially, but also to prepare them competently for employment and adult life. Therefore good attendance habits need to be established early in Primary School to set the pattern for the rest of the children's education.

## **Statement of intent**

"All schools should see the maximising of attendance rates as one of their key tasks."

This policy is the starting point in ensuring the pupils of Westwood Park enjoy an excellent attendance record throughout their eight years in this school and beyond into their Secondary and Further Education.

The school has put in place a clear set of procedures to encourage, monitor and report on the attendance of its pupils on a regular basis. The Headteacher, class teachers, Administrative Officers and pupils, parents/carers and the LA all have roles and responsibilities to ensure this policy is followed through into effective practice.

## **Practice and Procedures**

- The school attendance registers are completed at the start of the school day (8.45) and again at 1.00/1.15/1.25pm. Following completion the registers are then sent to the school office.
- The school day starts at 8.45am. A bell rings at 8.30 as a warning bell. Any child arriving late, up to 9.30am, will be recorded as L.
- If a child arrives at school at or after 9.30am, without a valid reason from parent/carer eg. doctor/dentist appointment, then the child will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence in the register for that session.
- When a child is absent from school the reason for the absence must be reported to the school **by telephone on the first date of absence and every day thereafter if there is no information**. If a pupil absence is not explained by 10.00am, then the school will make every effort to contact the child's parent/carer to discuss the reasons for the child's absence. We will text, phone, and do a home visit as necessary.
- The parent/carer is encouraged to put in writing the reason for a child's absence from school.
- When an appropriate reason is given for a pupil absence, this will be recorded as an **authorised absence**, eg. illness, doctor/dentist/hospital appointment,

music/dance exam. No more than 10 sessions authorised without medical evidence.

- After 10 authorised absences, medical evidence **MUST** be obtained to authorise any further absence.
- If an inappropriate reason is given eg. shopping trip, or **no reason at all is given for the absence**, then it will be recorded as an **unauthorised absence**.
- Term time holidays will only be authorised in '**special or exceptional circumstances**' in line with school's attendance policy. In the event that 'special circumstances do apply, the pupil's attendance to date must be 95% or above in order for the holiday to be authorised.
- Home visits may be carried out to absent pupils at the discretion of the EWO and school staff.
- We support persistent and severely absent pupils with additional meetings, support, visits, sign posting to other agencies, staff buddy for the child and legal processes.
- Fixed Penalties and other legal interventions may be used when attendance drops below 90% in discussion with the Education Welfare Officer and LA advice.

**Only the school can authorise an absence.**

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Head teacher (Attendance Champion) is responsible for...

- The regular review of the Attendance Policy and the monitoring and evaluation of the policy in practice.
- The regular review of all attendance registers and the follow up of any concerns highlighted in the review in liaison with the Learning Mentor.
- Liaison with the Administrative Officer responsible for attendance registers.
- Liaison with parents, pupils, class teachers and outside agencies such as the Education Welfare Officer.
- Making the final decision regarding the authorisation of an absence when appropriate reasons have not been given, even when these have been sought.

The Governing Body is responsible for ...

- Working in partnership with the Headteacher to oversee the implementation of this policy.
- Taking an active role in the monitoring and evaluating of the policy in practice and the effectiveness of its strategies.
- Our named Governor for attendance is Catherine Collier.

The class teacher is responsible for....

- Maintaining the daily attendance register and informing the Headteacher of any concerns of information regarding poor attendance or punctuality.
- Setting a good example and promoting good attendance at every opportunity.
- Calls home to promote attendance
- Promote attendance at Parents' Evenings, in class, and when children are dropped off or collected.

The Family Liaison Officer is responsible for...

- The tracking of attendance data, absences and lates for each class, including weekly and cumulative percentages.
- The audit of attendance levels on a weekly and monthly basis.
- Providing the Headteacher with data on pupils whose level of attendance/lateness is causing concern.
- Liaising with the EWO and Family Support Worker.
- Attendance Panel meetings with the EWO.

The Clerical Assistant is responsible for...

- Maintaining the records on SIMS and forwarding all returns as requested.

The parents/carers are responsible for...

- Ensuring the child attends school punctually each day and on a regular basis.
- Providing the school with a verbal reason on the first day of a child's absence or a written reason.
- Reporting to the school office if a child is to leave school during a working session to visit the dentist, doctor etc so that his/her name can be recorded as not in the school in the event of any emergency evacuation from the school building.
- Informing the school of any specific difficulty that is affecting, or will affect their child's regular and punctual attendance so that the school can look at ways of supporting the family at this time.

The Education Welfare Officer/Family Liaison Officer are responsible for...

- Reviewing the electronic registers on a regular basis.
- Discussing any concerns following the review or those raised by the Head teacher/Family Liaison Officer. If further action is needed the Head teacher/Family Liaison Officer and the Education Welfare Officer will decide what is to be done, how and by whom.
- Writing to or meeting with the parents/carers when poor attendance or punctuality continues after the Head teacher's initial liaison.
- Supporting the school in its Attendance Policy.
- Support for those families identified as having a child who is experiencing school attendance issues.
- Advice to school regarding legal sanctions, eg. Penalty Notice Warnings and fines, relating to non attendance at school.
- Home visits including unannounced visits to families causing concern. This may include families who have contacted school. (Child Protection).
- Holding attendance and punctuality meetings with parents.
- Attendance at Cluster meetings to share good practice.

### **How 'Good Attendance' is encouraged**

- Accurate registration.

- Setting school targets for attendance each year and actively working to promote and achieve this.
- Regular reviews of pupil attendance by Head teacher, Family Liaison Officer, Admin Officer, EWO, Home School Link Officer with appropriate Panel meetings and possible prosecution.
- Weekly 'In it to win it'.
- Termly draw of 100% for a bike or scooter.
- 100% badges for Autumn, Spring, Summer
- Yearly treat – eg – cinema trip for every pupil with 100% attendance.
- Free annual class trip for best attendance.
- Half termly 'chippy lunch' for the class with best attendance.
- Praise from Head teacher and/or Management Team for good or improved attendance/punctuality.
- Displaying class attendance certificates and percentages.
- Use of Newsletter, Website etc. to inform parents of class/school attendance statistics.
- Parents/carers working in partnership with school from early stages in relation to any issues that may affect their child's school attendance.

Letters/phone calls/texts are sent to parents/carers to express concern about attendance.

### **Covid**

The pandemic presented additional difficulties. Attendance remained our utmost priority. Families were given clear guidance about the importance of attendance at all times. Should any other unprecedented situation arise, staff are fully aware of an increased responsibility to support pupil well-being and be diligent about attendance, reporting any relevant information to the FLO and Head.

### **Review of the Policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually following its monitoring and evaluation.