



# **Walthamstow School For Girls**

*“Neglect not the gift that is in thee”*

## **Policy Document**

# **Attendance Policy**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- 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.

## 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:

- 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 The Governing Board

The governing 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.

If you have a link governor for attendance, or a committee responsible for attendance, add details of their role in the monitoring of pupil attendance.

### 3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 3.3 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil 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
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### 3.4 Class Teachers and Form Tutors

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

### 3.5 School Admin Staff

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## 4. RECORDING ATTENDANCE

### 4.1 Attendance Register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils on to 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 (Period 4). 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 I for the DfE attendance codes.

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 **8.40am** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at **8.45am** and will be kept open until **9.10am**. The register for the second session will be taken at **1.30pm** and will be kept open until **1.35pm**.

### 4.2 Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by **9.00am** or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

If a student is absent, parents/carers should call the school on the first day of the absence before 9.00am, stating a reason. The school will then decide whether to authorise the absence. If authorisation were to be refused, for instance if a student was kept off school for a birthday, then the parents or carer would be informed. Contact is essential for authorisation of absence.

If contact, explaining the student's absence, fails to be made by parents or carers, then the school will try to contact the home by telephone or text on the initial day of absence.

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, 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.

Unless unavoidable or in emergency circumstances, medical or dental appointments should be made out of school hours.

If your daughter has an unavoidable medical or dental appointment, the school requires that you send in the letter or appointment card as well as giving your permission yourself requesting that your daughter be allowed to leave school.

The school needs to see evidence of the appointment before we allow the student to leave the premises. We will also be 'spot checking' by telephoning parents and carers of students who wish to leave the premises to ensure the appointment is genuine.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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/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
- School begins at 8.45 am and all students are expected to be in school, ready for registration at this time. Any student arriving later than 8.45 am but before 9.10am should go straight to registration. If your daughter has an assembly however, she should sign in at the gate or school office on arrival and then go to assembly. Students arriving after 9.10 am will be required to produce a note from their parents or carer explaining the reason; otherwise they will be marked with having an unauthorised absence.
- Students who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, further action may be taken, e.g. Tutor or SPL report

### **4.5 Following Up Absence**

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by Texting or calling parent/carer.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

### **4.6 Reporting to Parents**

Student attendance is reported through Parentapp and school reports or can be requested from the school at any time.

## **5. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

### **5.1 Approval for Term-Time Absence**

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

A student's absence during term time can seriously disrupt the continuity of her learning. Not only does she miss the teaching provided on the days she is away, she is also less prepared for the lessons building on that after her return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement which we and you must seek to avoid.

Therefore, the school DOES NOT authorise absence during term time for family holidays or trips abroad.

Parents or carers do not have the right to take their daughter(s) out of school for holidays and the school will only grant leave of absence in truly exceptional circumstances.

A student who is absent longer than ten days after an agreed return date, or without authorisation, can legally be removed from the school roll.

Parents or carers who take their daughters out of school without the authorisation of the Headteacher face court action or a fine.

In considering whether or not to authorise leave of absence, the school will look at each case individually, taking into account a student's overall attendance, her stage of education, (e.g. examinations), and the reason for the absence. It is very rare that any student is granted leave of absence.

Leave of Absence forms can be obtained from the school office and all requests should be submitted to school at least four weeks before the first day of requested absence.

Arrangements for trips should NEVER be made before permission has been sought from the Headteacher.

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
- Traveler pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travelers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travelers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveler 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 Reducing Persistent Absence**

School will closely monitor attendance of our students and advise parent/carers if attendance is below or heading towards becoming a persistent absentee.

We will invite parents/carers in for a meeting to discuss attendance improvement and support that school can offer.

We may involve our Behavior, Attendance and Children Missing Education Team (BACME).

## **5.3 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 notice.

## **6. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE**

Explain your school's strategies for rewarding and improving attendance.

See the [DfE's guidance](#) for ideas.

## **7. ATTENDANCE MONITORING**

Staff at our school monitor pupil absence on a daily, weekly and half termly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above three days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the Behaviour, Attendance and Children Missing Education Team (BACME).

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

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.

School collects and stores attendance data on our student database (sims), and it may be used for internal purposes. For example, to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

## **8. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum [insert frequency] by [name/job title of individual]. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## **9. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## APPENDIX A: 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
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
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

<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil 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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## APPENDIX B: Low Attendance Letter I

Dear parent/carer,

As part of our monitoring and support process, we have identified (student name) as having % attendance so far this year.

As you know, good attendance is a crucial part of a successful education, especially as our young people have already missed so much precious face to face learning due to the pandemic over the last 2 years. The government guidelines state that any student with attendance below 90%, is considered a persistent absentee.

I shall be monitoring (student name)'s attendance this term and hope we see an improvement.

If you wish to discuss (student name)'s attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I thank you in advance for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Student Progress leader  
Year

## APPENDIX C: Low Attendance Letter 2

Dear parent/carer

As advised in my previous letter, we have been monitoring (student name)'s attendance and there has been little or no improvement in her attendance levels. It is imperative that pupils attend regularly to school and arrive on time if they are to get the best education available.

(Student name)'s attendance is currently (percentage attendance). I would like to take this opportunity to advise you that under Section 444 Education Act 1996, it is your parental responsibility to ensure that (student name) attends school regularly and punctually. **I must therefore advise you that from now on, any absence due to ill health must be accompanied by medical evidence or will not be authorised.**

I ask that you give this matter immediate attention to avoid further action. If you would like to discuss the contents of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I thank you in advance for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Student Progress Leader  
Year