

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Westfield Primary Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone’s part in this.
- 1.3 The policy has been drawn up following current Government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

2. School’s roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Westfield have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.
- 2.2 The Headteacher and Office Administrator will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school’s work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This Office Administrator will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared 2-weekly with the Headteacher and prepared for discussion with the Local Authority Educational Welfare Officer. Relevant information will be made available to staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance); a termly report is prepared for the governing body. Attendance issues will be identified at an early stage and support put in place to deal with any difficulties.

3. Registration

- 3.1 The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; the Attendance Register shall record, at the beginning of the morning session and once during the afternoon session whether a pupil is present, absent or attending an approved activity. Classroom teachers are responsible for ensuring the attendance register is completed.
- 3.2 The register will be called promptly at **9.00 am** and **1.15 pm** and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child:
Present am /
Present pm \
Absent O
- 3.3 The registers will close at **9.15 am** and **1.30 pm**. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will count as **absent**. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted **present** but will be dealt with under the school’s policy on attendance, punctuality and lateness (*see para. 7.4a*).

3.4 Arrival of pupils after 9.00am for the morning session or after 1.15pm for the afternoon session will be recorded in the "late book" with reason for lateness noted. Any pupil leaving school other than at expected time will also be recorded, with the reason for going.

3.5 Statutory requirements for register keeping:

- DO ensure all sessions are marked and coded appropriately;
- DO ensure all entries are in ink (if using paper registers);
- DO ensure all non-pupil days are clearly and correctly marked;
- DO ensure all corrections are visible and an explanation given;
- DO NOT leave sessions unmarked if a pupil is not present at registration – put a circle in the register for paper registers (mark electronically as an unauthorised absence: 'O').

For paper registers:

- DO NOT use pencil;
- DO NOT use correction fluid;
- DO NOT write on top of an existing code; always add an explanation at the bottom of the page;

3.6 Good practice for paper registers:

- Ensure that your register has the correct date at the top of the page;
- Ensure that you use a consistent ink pen colour (guidelines state black/red only);
- Ensure that your register is free of notes – these should be filed away weekly;
- Ensure that the pupil details are correct at all times (i.e. legal names used and addresses updated).

3.7 A reminder:

- A register is a legal document;
- It can be called to court for evidence (not just for education cases) at any time;
- There are statutory regulations in place which govern how a register should be kept (*see 3.5 above*);
- Schools are required by law to mark their Attendance Register at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session;
- A register must never remain unmarked in anticipation of a reason for absence being given.

3.8 Staff training:

The Headteacher and Office Administrator will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

4. Absence Codes

The Office Administrator will complete the absence code once reason for absence is known using the prescribed codes (shown below). If no reason is given this will be marked as 'N', however this code will remain for no more than 2 weeks.

Only the Office Administrator, the Headteacher or the EWO have authorisation for deciding an absence code.

See APPENDIX 1 for an explanation of the absence codes to be used.

5. Categorising absence

5.1 A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absent ('O') unless leave has been granted by the Headteacher in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher and Office Administrator.

- 5.2 Westfield Primary Academy recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and between attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Westfield Primary Academy will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their children's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. **The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.**
- 5.3 If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised.
- 5.4 Absences will be authorised in the following circumstances:
- (a) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
 - (b) where the pupil has a medical appointment; a medical appointment card should be presented to verify the appointment. However parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand;
 - (c) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
 - (d) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs;
 - (e) permission has been granted for leave of absence **for exceptional circumstances** for which the parent with whom the child normally resides has sought permission in advance;
 - (f) unexpected **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and for a very limited period.
 - (g) the pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority (*only applicable if the LA have agreed to provide transport*);
 - (h) the pupil student is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which requires him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, having reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
 - (i) where leave has been granted by the school, in advance, when a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority;

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- (j) no explanation has been given by the parent;
- (k) the school is not satisfied with the explanation and no supporting evidence has been given;
- (l) the pupil is staying at home to mind the house or care for unwell sibling/parent;
- (m) the pupil is shopping during school hours;
- (n) the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a birthday, anniversary;
- (o) the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday;
- (p) the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

5.5 Approved educational activity:

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

6. Collection and analysis of data

- 6.1 The Office Administrator will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the headteacher and LA Welfare/Attendance Officer. The report should include data for pupils with less than 90% attendance, monitored pupils and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance and pupils causing concern.
- 6.2 Attendance is monitored for individual pupils; patterns of absence are looked at, including by year group, class group and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity and pupils with special educational needs. Commentary on the trajectory and the school target will be analysed; the data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.
- 6.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

7. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

- 7.1 Regulations (Education Pupil Regulations 2006) require schools to inform the LA of every pupil who has been continuously absent without a good reason (i.e. the absence is unauthorised) for 10 school days or more. Schools and Academies must also inform the LA of every pupil who fails to attend regularly which is interpreted to mean those pupils who have patterns of unauthorised absence without amassing 10 continuous absence.
- 7.2 Attendance has a very high profile at Westfield Academy and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in classes. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment; registration certificates showing attendance figures are produced to accompany each pupil report, to inform parents.
- 7.3 First-day calling:
Westfield Primary Academy has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be sent a text, telephoned or emailed on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, other means of gaining the information will be sought.
- 7.4 School Strategies to Tackle Absence:
 - a) Pupils with less than 90% attendance will receive a notification letter from the school alerting parents to the school's concerns and giving an expectation that attendance will improve.
 - b) Penalty Notice:
 - i. Any pupil with a total of 4 sessions of unauthorised absence will be given a reminder/warning about attendance;
 - ii. If a total of 8 or more unauthorised absence sessions have occurred (4 whole days in total) a fixed Penalty Notice fine will be issued;
 - iii. All referrals for the Penalty Notice will be sent to Margaret Smith, Lead Attendance Officer for the Local Authority. Referrals will be signed by the Headteacher (or staff member nominated by them). The Penalty Notice will be sent to each parent of each child for:
 - A total of 8 sessions unauthorised absence
 - Identified on a truancy sweep and the absence is confirmed as unauthorised by LA or police
 - iv. As set by the Government, the current fine for a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days, for each parent, for each child; after 21 days it increases to £120 if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay may lead to prosecution in the Magistrates Court.
 - c) Fast track - If there is no improvement in the pupil's attendance or where there is an emerging pattern of absence or continued lateness, a referral will be made to the Educational Welfare Officer. A warning letter will be sent and parents asked to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the

attendance within a specified time limit (i.e. a 6 week action plan). It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

At the end of the six weeks monitoring period the matter is:

- i. closed, if attendance improved
- ii. given an extension to the plan, in exceptional circumstances
- iii. considered for prosecution, if unauthorised absences have continued

7.5 Lateness and punctuality:

Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late.

- a) Pupils who arrive late, before the register is closed, will be monitored; if lateness persists a letter will be sent to parents reminding them of the start time of the school session, school policy and the importance of punctuality.
- b) Pupils who arrive after the register closes (see para. 3.3) will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late (such a reason will not include things such “we’re just late”, clothes in the washing machine, watching TV, lost shoes, etc); the school has the option to deal with unauthorised absence, due to lateness, under the protocols for issuing a fixed Penalty Notice fine (see para 7.4). A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness, can be dealt with in the same way as other pupils with an emerging pattern of absence. (See para. 7.4). If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

7.6 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Details of pupils arriving late will be noted in the “late book” by the office staff; pupils leaving the premises at times other than the end of the day will also be recorded in the late book.

7.7 Post-registration truancy:

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. If a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, school staff will first look for the child on school premises and will then try to make contact with his/her parents immediately or call the police.

8. Leave of Absence during term time

An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the intended leave. The headteacher will consider authorising leave of absence for:

- a) service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking leave during term-time;
- b) when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a significant crisis;
- c) parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided by the employer to this effect;

Requests for special leave of absence for the following reasons will **not** be authorised:

- d) a family holiday including those booked by a third party (i.e. grandparents);
- e) overlap with beginning or end of term;
- f) the headteacher will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests ie: SATS.

9. Extended leave of absence

In considering absence for extended trips overseas the headteacher will take account of the following:

- a) if a visit to family overseas is important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up;
- b) if parents feel the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip);
- c) when the reasons for wishing to make a visit is more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances are involved;
- d) where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period;
- e) if a child does not return to school on the expected return date any subsequent absence will be unauthorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.

10. Parents' / carers' responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/carers, defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility **and** those who have the care of a child. They will be supported and encouraged by Westfield Primary Academy.

The school expects that parents / carers will:

- a) ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- b) support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- c) not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Parents will also be expected to:

- d) notify Westfield Primary Academy on the first day of absence; this can be by:
 - i. a telephone call or message to 01440 761697;
 - ii. a text message to 07870 633907;
 - iii. email message to admin@westfieldschool.co.uk
- e) ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- f) work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- g) contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives, if there is a situation at home that may affect the emotional well being of their child and if there is a significant change in home circumstances Westfield Primary Academy will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

11. Pupils' responsibilities

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to a member of staff e.g. their class teacher, one of the Fuzzy Club staff or the headteacher.

Pupils / students also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

12. Governors' responsibilities

Section 175 (2): The governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

13. Conclusion

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring positive outcomes for all children.

These include:

- a) good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings;
- b) the best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly;
- c) regular attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development;
- d) the school curriculum teaches children to be healthy;
- e) schools and the LA have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children;
- f) membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others;
- g) good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style.

R A Campbell

Headteacher

2/5/13: Approved by the Governing Body

13/5/13: Revised with Lead Attendance Officer for the LA to include amendments made to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 that come into force from 1st September 2013

<https://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/regulations-amendments>

1/10/13: Conversion to Academy status; policy statement unchanged.

*July 2014: This policy has been revised in the light of Cabinet decisions made by Suffolk County Council regarding **Amendments to Penalty Notices Code of Conduct** to tackle non-school attendance; an agreement is in place across partnership schools regarding this matter (see paragraphs 7.4 and 7.5)*

Westfield CP School Attendance Policy
APPENDIX 1

Ref para 4 : Absence Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES	MEANING
/	Present (AM)		Present
\	Present (PM)		Present
B	Present mark - Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Attending induction/taster days at other schools Attending another school as a "guest" pupil	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	i.e wedding or funeral; possible 3 days authorised: day to travel there, day for the event, day for return travel; special leave of absence.	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	For the session they are not required to attend your school	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)		Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	inc. hospitalisation beyond initial medical appointment	Authorised absence
J	<i>Interview</i>	<i>Applies to Year 11 pupils only</i>	<i>Approved Education Activity</i>
L	Present mark - Late (before registers closed)	NB: Registers close at 9.15 am and 1.30 pm	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	If pupil is present for registration and has medical appointment later – no absence is recorded	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Code will remain for no more than 2 weeks; if still no reason given, should be replaced with code 'O'	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)		Unauthorised absence
P	Present mark - Approved sporting activity	i.e school organised and supervised	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance		Authorised absence
S	<i>Study leave</i>	<i>Applies to Year 11 pupils only</i>	<i>Authorised absence</i>
T	Traveller absence		Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	NB: Registers close at 9.15 am and 1.30 pm	Unauthorised absence
V	Present mark - Educational visit or trip (inc residential trips)	For registration off site; if registered at school – ordinary reg mark used	Approved Education Activity

W	<i>Work experience</i>	<i>Applies to Year 10 and Year 11 pupils only</i>	<i>Approved Education Activity</i>
X	Non-compulsory school age absence. i.e. Pupils who have not attained the age of 5 at the start of the term in which session takes place	i.e other Nursery session for p/t pupil (start school age: term after 5 th birthday)	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure i.e. - School site or part of it is closed due to unavoidable cause at a time when pupils are due to attend. - Local or national emergency has resulted in widespread travel disruption	Can be used for part pupils – HT discretion ref which pupils are able to attend if school is open	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	i.e. pre-admission group inc. pupils who never turn up at the school.	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils		Not counted in possible attendances