



# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

**This policy is applicable to:** The Wolds Learning Partnership (WLP)

## Version 3.0

<b>Important:</b> This document can only be considered valid when viewed on the website. If this document has been printed or saved to another location, you must check that the version number on your copy matches that of the document online.	
<b>Name of Responsible Committee/Individual:</b>	Board of Trustees
<b>Target Audience:</b>	Staff, Parents, Pupils/students
<b>Referenced Documents:</b>	Individual schools' attendance guidance

### Rationale

Excellent attendance and punctuality are key in helping the school to ensure it achieves its mission statement of "Care and Achievement". Without good attendance and punctuality pupils/students do not achieve their



true potential and their belief in and understanding of our school values are not developed. To challenge and to support pupils/students to attend and be on time is to care for their futures and their welfare. It is everyone's responsibility as a member of our school community to protect all our students and to ensure they have the best life chances; hence it is all our responsibilities to ensure excellent attendance and punctuality.

Providing safe and happy places to learn is essential to achieving school improvement, raising achievement and attendance, promoting equality and diversity and ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the school community. Every member of the community has rights and responsibilities which enable us to work and learn in a school environment in which we feel safe and supported.

This policy outlines the underlying philosophy, purpose, nature, organisation and management of attendance in the Wolds Learning Partnership (WLP). It is a working document designed to promote positive attendance and reduce absence from school.

The policy reflects current practice within the schools. It's fair and consistent implementation is the responsibility of all staff. The WLP takes an active approach to promoting good attendance. With the support of parents, the wider community, the Local Authority and the pupils/students themselves, we take a positive approach to safeguard the well-being of all pupils/students and staff.

## **Aims**

In order to improve the overall attendance of pupils/students in the WLP we aim:

- To make attendance and punctuality our priority for all those associated with the WLP, including pupils/students, parents/carers, teachers and governors.
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- To implement a system of rewards and sanctions.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents/carers and pupils/students.
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- To promote effective partnerships with supporting services and agencies.
- To recognise and address the needs of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

## **Definitions**

It is the Headteacher's discretion as to whether a child's absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

### **Authorised absence:**

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent/carers write a note or telephone the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents/carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school and gives the reason that it was to go shopping for school shoes, this will not mean it is authorised absence.

### **Unauthorised absence:**

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent/carers. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school



without good reason, even with the support of a parent for example a parent letting their child sleep in late as a result of a late night would be unauthorised.

#### **Persistent absence:**

- The DfE define a 'persistent absentee' as a pupil/student who, at any point in the year, has accumulated absence at 10% or more of the available sessions regardless of whether or not any of it is authorised. The PA status may change as the terms progress, but these students are at particular risk of achieving poor outcomes at school and beyond.

#### **Lates:**

- We require pupils to arrive at school on time so they are able to access all learning opportunities available to them.
- Pupils who are regularly late to school will be dealt with as per the individual school guidance.

#### **Requests for leave of absence**

We believe that all children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. For this reason, as a general rule, we do not authorise leave of absence (including holidays) in term time.

The Headteacher has the discretion to make exceptions to this rule and authorise leave of absence for special circumstance (Using Code 'H': Family Holiday Agreed).

Special circumstances may include:

- Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupils/student's education.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

The national guidance suggests that requests for the following reasons should not be authorised:

- Availability of cheap holidays.
- Availability of desired accommodation.
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods.
- Overlap with beginning or end of term.

If the school knows that the pupils/student has siblings in other schools, it is advisable to make contact with the other school to come to an agreement when coding the leave of absence (i.e. whether the leave of absence is authorised or unauthorised). If necessary the WLP reserves the right to issue penalty notices for holidays taken in term-time.

#### **Religious Observance**

The DfE recommends the use of Code 'R' when children are absent from school to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals. Parents should be encouraged to give advance notice.

This is interpreted to mean that if the parent's religious organisation sets the day as a religious festival then the school must authorise the absence. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parent's religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.



If the religious body has not set the day apart there is no requirement for the school to approve the absence or grant a leave absence. Additional holidays and days off linked to the religious festival but not “exclusively set aside for religious observance” by the religious body are not marked using Code ‘R’.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

All members of the school community have roles and responsibilities in promoting and ensuring good attendance and punctuality.

### **Role of the pupils/students**

Pupils/students have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the education opportunities available.

All pupil/students will:

- Ensure that they attend school and are on time.
- Be aware of their current attendance record and targets.
- Be aware of the consequences of poor attendance or truancy.
- Arrive to lessons punctually.
- Not leave school without permission.
- Follow correct procedures for known absences.
- Respect themselves and others.
- Encourage friendship and a sense of belonging.
- Inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied or feel unhappy in school.

### **Role of parents/carers**

- Parents and carers have an essential role in ensuring their child’s attendance

### **Parents/Carers should:**

- Establish good attendance habits by acting as a role model and showing the children that good attendance and punctuality is important.
- Praise and reward good attendance: even small successes, e.g. getting ready quickly, even if resisting going to school.
- Talk regularly with their child about school and how they feel about it. Children are more likely to want to attend and learn if they feel supported and their anxieties are listened to.
- Contact the school by phone, text, email or letter as soon as possible to say why their child is absent and when they are expected to return.
- To ensure that when the child returns to school after their absence they provide a letter of explanation for the absence if the individual schools guidance requires this.
- Only grant days at home for genuine illness.
- Arrange for a friend to take a child to school if a sibling is sick.
- Avoid taking holidays in school time.
- Ensure that wherever possible, medical appointments are made outside of the school day.
- Know routines of the school day to avoid issues, e.g. ensuring children have their PE kits on the right days.
- Establish a good bedtime routine, so that their child can sleep well, get enough sleep and make mornings less of a struggle.

### **Role of the School**

As a school we:



- Create a school ethos and environment that pupils/students want to be part of.
- Meet the legal requirements set out by Government.
- Give a high priority to punctuality and attendance.
- Develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention.
- Consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the 1995 Education Act.
- Develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long-term absenteeism and promote good attendance.
- Encourage open communication channels between home and school.
- Develop procedures for the reintegration of long-term absentees.
- Adequately provide for pupils/students with additional needs, within the bounds of the resources available, and ensure appropriate delivery of the curriculum.

#### **Role of the Attendance Administrator**

- Consult and inform the relevant member of staff about pupils whose attendance is cause for concern.
- Ensure truancy issues are followed up and discussed with parents.
- Liaise with parents when attendance is a concern.
- Ensure attendance procedures are implemented equitably regardless of race, gender etc.
- Work with the relevant member of staff in ensuring appropriate strategies are in place for improving attendance and reducing persistent lateness.
- Identify pupils whose attendance can be improved by increased support.
- Remove all in school barriers that stop pupils attending or being on time.
- Support and challenge all absences and poor punctuality.
- Alongside the relevant member of staff, provide strategic direction and clarity in removing all barriers to excellent attendance and punctuality.
- First day contact: On the first day of absence, if the school has not received a reason for a child being away from school, the Attendance Administrator will make contact with parents/carers. This is done either by phone call or text messaging service. Where no contact can be made, the school will send home a letter requesting the reason for absence. Where there is no response, the child's absence will be unauthorized.

#### **Schools in the WLP should promote positive attendance by:**

- Implement and monitor a system of rewards and sanctions
- Provide a system of rewards for good attendance and improvements made by pupils/students where appropriate.
- Actively promote attendance and associated rewards and effective sanctions (see individual schools behavior guidance).
- Where necessary use Attendance Panels, Parenting Contracts and Fixed Penalty Notices in circumstances where attendance has fallen to the level of a potential persistent absentee and parents are not responding to usual channels of communication or have been unable to promote improved attendance or have requested support. Ensure fair and consistent implementation of Attendance Policy with all stakeholders.
- Ensure pupils or students are clearly aware of the school's expectations of punctuality.
- Spot trends and identify pupils/students who need support.
- Encourage families to book medical appointments outside of the school day wherever possible.



Where the school has concerns around a pupil/student's attendance they should intervene in one or more of the following ways:

- Back to School Meetings with appropriate member of staff/and or EWO
- Put interventions in place for students/pupils with poor attendance.
- Issue Fixed penalties
- Hold Attendance Panel meetings

### **Role of Governing Body**

Under the Education (Student Registration) Regulations 1995, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils/students are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.