



## Policy: Attendance

Updated:

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Chair of Governors:

Mrs H Anderson

Head Teacher:

Mrs L Rodham

## **Policy for Attendance**

### **1. Rationale**

Attendance is increasingly regarded as a measure of the quality of education offered by a school. Wellfield School seeks to ensure access to educational opportunities for all students, whatever their race, culture, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, social background or special educational needs. When “efficient and full-time education” (Education Act 1996, 2011) is not being accessed because of poor attendance, the school seeks to rectify this problem by providing positive support to these students and their families through multi agency intervention. We aim to create a culture where good attendance is the norm and valued by students, parents and staff.

### **2. Purposes**

- To state procedures for marking registers, analysing attendance data and responding to nonattendance.
- To promote a partnership between the school, parents and other relevant agencies working in the best interests of the student’s education.
- To define roles and responsibilities.
- To clarify the referral procedure.
- To state monitoring systems.
- To state how attendance information is communicated to staff, pupils, parents and governors.
- To state the legal framework for attendance.

### **3. Standards and Expectations**

- Registers for morning and afternoon sessions are taken using the SIMS system. The same system is used for class registrations.
- Form Tutors (FT) are responsible for the morning registration and for alerting the Head of Learning (HoL) and Attendance Officer (AO) to unexplained absence.
- Admin Staff and PSOs (Pastoral Support Officers) work with the AO make first day contact, and alert Tutors with any messages received into school regarding attendance.
- The Attendance Officer (AO) assists Admin Staff with first day contact and attempts to follow up instances when no contact is made by parents – via phone calls and/or letter, email etc.
- Phone calls to parents who have not contacted the school to inform of their child’s absence will be made by 9.30am (GHu – Y7, SCR – Y8, DT – Y9, LC –Y10, EH – Y11)
- Heads of Learning and Tutors monitor attendance with the AHT Attendance and Behaviour, Attendance Officer, both formally and informally. Referrals are made through them, although all staff are at liberty to express their concerns.
- The Attendance Team (12 members of staff comprise of SLT and HoLs/HoDs) hold weekly meetings with students with attendance between 91-94%. They are responsible for the attendance of their group and will report on their group at weekly meetings with the Headteacher.

- The AHT Attendance and Behaviour provides weekly analysis of each year group's attendance including detailed analysis of their vulnerable groups (including School Support, students with EHCP's, Gender identity, Ethnicity, CLA, Pupil Premium, FSM, EAL, and G&T students).
- Heads of Learning, the Attendance Officer and the AHT for Attendance and Behaviour inform staff and students of the attendance of their groups on a weekly basis.
- Pegasus Points are awarded for attendance and punctuality. Rewards are also issued weekly for students with 100% attendance (5 Pegasus Points per pupil) and improved attendance. Attendance forms part of the criteria for trips out of school, where students must achieve agreed thresholds.
- Sanctions are given for truants and students who are late to school.
- Certificates are awarded by the AO for the most improved attendance.
- The school has a Banding Report (See appendix A) for attendance and has clear escalation at each stage involving Tutors, Heads of Learning, the Attendance Officer, the AHT with responsibility for Attendance and Behaviour and the Headteacher.
- The school has a clear procedure for managing Persistent Absentees and is involved in a Fast Track system for prosecuting parents of students who persistently fail to attend school or fail to respond to support offered. (See Appendix A). The school will also use Fixed Penalty Notices (Fines) for parents who condone poor attendance by their child at school.
  - Letters are sent to parents of pupils whose attendance falls to 95% or below if appropriate.
  - Where absence cannot be easily resolved, a multi-agency approach to the problem is sought via the TAF process.
  - The Attendance Officer follows county procedures when dealing with non-attendance.
  - Ethnic minority religious holidays and the rights of other groups (e.g. travellers) are recognised by the school.

#### **4. Attendance Improvement and Intervention**

At Wellfield School every student is expected to attend school on every occasion the school is open. The only acceptable exception is when illness or injury is so serious that it prevents the student from attending school. Parents and carers should be aware that daily attendance at school is compulsory for all children aged 5-16 and that it is their legal responsibility that their children attend school on a regular basis.

Wellfield School seeks to ensure that all our pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

We believe that all students benefit from the education we provide, and therefore from regular attendance. The aim of our attendance policy is to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to support parents in helping them to meet their legal duty; to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time. A whole school attendance target of 96% has been set for the **academic year 2019/2020** and various measures will be put in place to help work towards this.

The school has established an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

This policy has been written in line with the DFE 'School attendance Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' (October 2014) and 'School attendance parental responsibility measures' (January 2015).

This policy is supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning.

### **Attendance and Attainment**

We recognise that the relationship between the attendance and achievement of our students is inextricably linked.

Regular school attendance is crucial to maximise pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to.

#### **We will ensure that:**

- All students have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the national curriculum, or agreed alternative.
- We will take action to improve attendance so that students will not be deprived of their education opportunities by, either their absence or lateness.

### **The Law in relation to the responsibility of parents and carers**

You need to make sure your child attends school regularly and on time. Parents and carers are responsible for this duty in law, you will be **breaking the law** if you do not do this and there are no good reasons for missing school.

The School and Local Authority **want to help you if you have a problem**. If attendance does not get better or you do not accept help and support offered, the Council may issue you with a Warning Notice or a Penalty Notice or ask you to attend an interview to ask questions to ascertain whether you have broken the law.

If you go to court and are found guilty of an offence, you could be fined up to £1,000 for a less serious offence or up to £2,500 if the law breaking is more serious. **In very serious cases, the court may involve the probation service or consider up to 3 months in prison.**

### **Attendance Procedures**

#### **a) On the first day off and any further absence**

If a child is ill or is absent for any reason, parents or carers must phone the School Office giving a reason for the child's absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home then school will send a text to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why. This may be followed by a phone call if no response is received.

Doctors and Dentists appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they need to do so.

### **b) Periods of extended absence**

The school will contact you each day your child is absent from school. If a child's absence continues beyond 3 days then parents are requested to notify the school to update them. If a phone call is not received then the school will contact home to verify the absence.

If the school receives no reason for any absence then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in further action such as referral to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider enforcement action and possibly a Fixed Penalty Notice (this includes unauthorised absences accrued through leave of absence taken during term time).

### **If your child is absent from school more than they should be:**

At the end of each half term the School Attendance Officer will analyse absence across the school. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if their child's absence is lower than it should be if no prior discussion has taken place (unless this is due to frequent hospital appointments and/or long term medical needs).

### **c) Help & Support:**

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you talk to the school about the issues as soon as possible. You may need to attend a meeting in school to talk about the problems and to put a plan in place to help. Sometimes, school may need to involve other services to help.

### **d) Communication:**

The school will always try to communicate with you regarding your child's attendance if it declines. This communication may involve explaining that attendance is a cause for concerns by letter, making telephone calls to you, and inviting you to attend a meeting in school depending on the circumstances. The school will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve the situation.

### **e) Enforcement Action:**

If, following the schools attempts to intervene there is no significant improvement and no good reasons for absences (i.e. absences are not supported by relevant evidence), or you have not co-operated with the school's attempts to improve the situation the school is required to consider referring the matter to the Local Authority for enforcement action.

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. If your child misses school a lot because of illness, or if school do not know of any serious health issue that would mean your child could miss school a lot, the school may ask to you to provide medical evidence to authorise absences.

We are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

### **f) Punctuality:**

Registration time is at 08:35 am and lesson 4 (upper school 12:05 pm and lower school 12:45 pm.) It is important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class. If a child arrives late then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L) or a 'U' will be recorded if any child is late after registers close. This mark is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued).

**If your child is late for school:**

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the school's attendance data base (SIMs).

**1. If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions;**

A letter will be sent home from school to parents to say their child's punctuality is causing some concern. An appointment with the Attendance Officer will be offered to discuss ways that the school can offer support in finding a way improve this.

**2. If lateness becomes persistent with no identifiable reason;**

A letter will be sent home from school with a specific appointment given to meet with the Attendance Officer for a 'planning meeting'. The letter will also inform parents'/carers that their child will now be on no-notice detention for every day that they are late. this will aim to address any issues which may be behind this pattern of poor punctuality.

**3. If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality;**

Then a referral may be made to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider if enforcement action is required.

**g) Leave of Absence in Term Time**

Head teachers are no longer able to grant leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. The school will consider each request of absence individually; taking into account the circumstances, such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the pupil's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time e.g. termly tests, exams.

An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form which is available from the school website or in person from the school office. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion. As stated in the most recent DFE guidance on attendance, if an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

**Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.**

**5. Promoting good attendance and punctuality**

Incentives are used throughout the school year to support and encourage good attendance. Certificates are given at half-term to pupils who achieve 100% attendance over that half-term. Pupils who achieve above 96% attendance receive a text home to celebrate meeting the school standards. A record of an individual pupils' attendance is sent to parents at each parents' evening and at the end of each academic year.

**6. Children Missing from Education:**

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that if you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.

### **7. Roles and Responsibilities Governing Body:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed to parents and staff.
- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents, and students to implement the policy effectively.
- Ensure that the school is effectively recording attendance and organising all attendance data, including for children who are educated off site.

### **School Leadership Team:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the leadership team will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with students and their parents.
- Ensure the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Co-ordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the policy and its effectiveness, with an annual review of policy and procedures.
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues.
- Ensure government legislation on attendance is complied with and that the leadership team are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them.
- Nominate or appoint a senior leader to take responsibility for overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to the job.
- Report to the Governors each term on attendance records, data and provision.
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively.

### **Teachers and support staff:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with students and their parents.
- Ensure the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Ensure the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Ensure the senior leader responsible for overseeing attendance and any other relevant personnel (Heads of Learning and Attendance Officer) are kept fully aware of and up to date with any concerns relating to students that may impact on their attendance.
- Ensure compliance with regulation and guidance on attendance.
- Work professionally with parents, carers, students and relevant agencies to secure improvements in attendance via appropriate support or enforcement measures.
- Ensure understanding of and are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken each lesson and session.

### **Parents / Carers:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, we expect that parents / carers will:

- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school.
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home.
- Follow the procedures outlined in this policy regarding absences, ill health, medical or dental appointments, leave of absence in term time and punctuality. Including phoning school each day of an absence.
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences.
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance and work with staff in resolving any issues that may be having an impact on their child.
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime etc. so that the child is used to consistency and school is part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same messages at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance.

### **School processes to support Attendance Policy:**

#### **Recording Attendance:**

- Registers are completed twice a day, in the morning by the tutor and in lesson 4 by the class teacher.
- Where there is an unauthorised absence after registers close a text message is sent to parents or a telephone call is made.
- Before the close of the morning session telephone calls may be made to parents/ carers who have not responded to the text message.

#### **Monitoring and Managing Students attendance**

- Tutors take initial responsibility for the pastoral welfare of each child in their tutor group including attendance.
- Pupil trackers are discussed by the form tutors with pupils weekly to encourage student responsibility in their attendance. Each pupil will track their weekly and cumulative attendance record.
- Attendance issues are escalated from tutors to Heads of Learning or from the Attendance Officer. Pastoral issues are raised at weekly meetings with Heads of Learning, the AHT for Attendance and Behaviour and multi-agencies involved where necessary.
- Referrals are made to the Attendance improvement team for unauthorised leave of absence of 5 days or over for a Formal Warning and where unauthorised absences are a concern. Absences of 7 days and over will trigger a Fixed Penalty Notice.

#### **Communication and Analysis**

- Heads of Learning, AHT for Attendance and Behaviour, Detentions Co-coordinator are informed of the student absences daily.
- Attendance analysis data is sent to all staff weekly.
- Pupil Tracker information is sent to all Heads of Learning and Tutors weekly and shared with students.
- The Attendance Officer reviews pupil attendance data and sends letters to parents (late letters, unknown absences letters, absence concern letters, and medical evidence letters). Information is shared with Heads of Learning and Tutors each week.
- Invite parents to an attendance meeting when required; every meeting with a parent by any member of staff will include attendance as an agenda item.
- Posters, attendance agenda in assemblies, attendance good news shared in the Pegasus newsletter and on the school website.

- Trophies are awarded by EH weekly in assemblies to the best attending tutor group.
- Letters to parent will be sent to both parents even if they are living at the same address.
- At the start of each new year a letter is sent to parents informing them of their child's attendance for the previous year and either congratulating them or making them aware that improvement is needed. A reminder leaflet of the protocols for attendance is included with this mail.

### **Rewards**

- Every week the 'best' attending tutor group receive the 'Jump the Queue' lunchtime vouchers and win the tutor group trophy for that week.
- Incentive schemes are used throughout the year to encourage attendance.
- Certificates are issued at the half-term point to students with 100% attendance that half term and texts sent home for students achieving 96+ attendances.
- 100% attendance badges are awarded to those with 100% attendance all year in the first Year Group assembly in the following September.
- Rewards are given to students with above 96% attendance at the end of each half term (or those who have met a threshold for them as individuals).
- All rewards are at the discretion of the Headteacher and the decision made by the Headteacher is final.

### **Administration**

- Use DCC standard letters including Leave of Absence letters. Record reasons for absence in notes section on SIMS edit marks. Record medical appointments in notes section on SIMS and file.
- File Leave of Absence requests and letters in pupil files.
- Ensure correct codes are used for all absences.
- **Create an electronic folder for students who are tracked through AIT**