# THE WEST GRANTHAM CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY ACADEMY

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## Contents

## 1. Aims

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.

### 3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

> Implementation of this policy at the academy.

> 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 Manager

The school attendance manager:

> Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level

> Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher

> Works 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

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

### 3.5 School office staff

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

### 3.6 Parents

Parents are responsible for

> Ensuring their children attend regularly and punctually
> Ensuring that they contact the school whenever their child is unable to attend, preferably by 8.30 am
> Ensure medical appointments are made outside of school time
> Contact the school in a timely manner for each day of student's absence via Dojo, email or phone
> Contacting the school of any concerns around their child's attendance
> Ensuring that their children arrive well prepared for the day
> Providing medical evidence of illness as requested by the school

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and again at the outset of the afternoon sessions. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Amendments may be made by authorised staff when new information has been received and a note of this will be made on the electronic register.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for three years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.30am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at the beginning of period 3.

### 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7) on the school absence phone line or by email to office@wgpa.snmat.org.uk.

Only the Headteacher OR Head of Academies (or their delegate) can approve an absence from school. That is the law. Absence will be recorded using the code recommended by the Department for Education guidance on School Attendance. Absences due to illness are recorded as authorised absence and medical evidence to verify this illness may be requested by the Academy, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. Children with persistent absence may be requested to provide evidence for all absences. Other absences may be unauthorised unless C coded for exceptional circumstances or other authorised reasons.

### 4.3 Planned absence

Parents are expected to make dental and medical appointments outside of school time, however essential or emergency medical or dental appointments will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Appointment cards or other evidence may be required.

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. Leave of absence from school will not be authorised except in exceptional circumstances.

### 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils who arrive late to registration are recorded as L (late before registration closes.) or as U (unauthorised absence) if arrival is after 9.30am.

Registration times is 8.40am until 8.50am on the Junior site and 9.00am on the Infant site at West Grantham Church of England Primary Academy. Pupils should be on school site at least 5 minutes before registration.

Frequent late arrival will be challenged by the Academy and letters sent to parents/carers. Persistent late arrival will result in parents/carers being asked to attend a meeting.

### 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 for the day's absence.

> Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary

> Identify whether the absence is approved or not

> Identify the correct attendance code to use

> Make home visit as necessary

### 4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported to parents through termly parents open evening and in their annual school reports. If letters of concerned are issued the attendance certificate will form a part of the parents meeting and shared with parents, and with the pupil as appropriate.

## 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.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

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

> Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller 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

Persistent Absence is defined by less than 90% attendance, but the school will monitor all absence to target unauthorised absence.

If a pupil is absent from school for a period of time that is deemed unacceptable, daily contact will be maintained by the school office. The attendance manager will contact the family to discuss any issues which may be contributing to poor attendance and letters of concern will be sent.

Parents of students with poor attendance are required to attend an attendance panel. The panel will by invitation of the Attendance Manager and the panel may include any professionals involved in the student's welfare. This may include a member of the safeguard team, headteacher or school governor. The aim of

this meeting is to improve future attendance and prevent the need for referral to targeted support to begin legal proceedings

## 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

Pupils are encouraged to attend regularly and punctually. The school promotes these good habits through the pupils' education and recognises good attendance through various reward systems which motivate and recognise good, and improved, attendance.  These rewards may involve such things as:

- 96% and above for the term is rewarded with certificates in celebration assembly.
- Awards for class with the highest attendance each week with Attendance Ted spending the week with the class
- Individual rewards for improved attendance – these may be from the attendance manager rewards resources or a bespoke negotiated reward for the individual child.


## 7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance manager at our school monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

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.

Monitoring attendance is achieved through

- ➢ Completion of daily registers by tutors and monitored by the school office in the first instance to ensure consistent daily good practice
- ➢ Monitored weekly by the Attendance Manger to recognise patterns, poor attendance, and monitoring of groups (eg classes, EAL, SEN, PPG etc)
- ➢ Sharing of class data with class teachers weekly for comparative purposes.
- ➢ Tracking of individuals who have raised concern (PA, on-going medical issues, new to school etc)
- ➢ Impact of interventions, panel meetings, home visits.
- ➢ Half termly reports are prepared for head teacher and Governors by the Attendance Manager.

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, by the Attendance Manager. 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 1: 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 |
|------|------------|----------|
| **Authorised absence** | | |
| **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 |
| **T** | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence | Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| **Unauthorised absence** | | |
| **G** | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| **N** | 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) |
| **O** | Unauthorised absence | Absence from school has not been authorised |
| **U** | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

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

**Appendix 2: attendance procedure**

his procedure is designed to be followed in a linear pattern. If an improvement is seen at any step, then the process will freeze. If the improvement is not sustained it will continue to the next step. This procedure, although in place, can be used with discretion by the Senior Leaders.

**1**
- Pupil has less than 95% attendance by the week before october half term.
- Letter sent and 2 weeks given to improve

**2**
- No improvement is seen within 2 weeks, second letter sent.
- 2 weeks given to improve

**3**
- No improvement is seen within 2 weeks, Attendance Panel date set.
- Panel completed. 2 weeks given to improve
- Invitation to complete an Early Help Assessment.

**4**
- No improvement seen within 2 weeks, Fixed Penalty Notice warning letter sent for unauthorised absence. 1 week given to improve.

**5**
- No improvement within 1 week, LCC contacted to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

**6**
- No improvement, LCC contacted to seek further legal intervention.