

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

January 2022



# Watergate School

## Attendance Policy

### 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 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

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 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 onto 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. 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 1 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 9:15am (Bellingham site) or 9:30am (Ladywell site) on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:30am and will be kept open until 9:45am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:30pm.

### 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:15am or as soon as practically possible. This should be done by phoning the main school office on 0208 695 6555. Outside of office hours, there is an option to leave a message regarding pupil absence.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorized, however 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. This should be done by phoning or visiting the school office.

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 more than 30 minutes after the beginning of registration will be marked absent for that session (e.g.; half day), using the appropriate code.

Parents/carers bring children to school late, should advise school admin of the reasons for lateness.

Persistent lateness may lead to the school writing to a parent/carer and inviting them to a meeting with the school's Attendance and Welfare Officer.

#### 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 phoning the parent/carer and following up with a text and/or email where it has not been possible to get in contact by phone.
- ✓ Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- ✓ Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- ✓ Identify the correct attendance code to use
- ✓ Inform the school's Attendance and Welfare Office where appropriate

#### 4.6 Reporting to parents

Pupil attendance is reported annually to parents/carers as part of the child's Annual Review of their Education, Health and Care Plan.

### 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

Where the school identifies that a pupil is persistently absent, the school will contact the family to identify any barriers preventing or hindering attendance. We will work in partnership with families and any appropriate external agencies to agree an action plan to address these barriers and support improved attendance.

#### 5.3 Legal sanctions

Although we would seek to avoid reaching a point where legal sanctions could be imposed, the school, local authority or police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

### 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At Watergate School, we encourage and promote attendance by:

- delivering clear messages about expectations and routines to new pupils and families through prospectus and admission/transition events, including the signing of a Home-School Agreement
- using physical presence of staff to reinforce routines and expectations on arrival and departure
- regularly communicating expectations for attendance and punctuality and school performance through your regular channels of communication with staff, pupils and parents
- monitoring whole school data regularly to identify reasons for absence, patterns, attendance of particular groups and the impact of interventions
- establishing, implementing and monitoring robust arrangements to identify, report and support children missing education (CME)

- developing appropriate support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans)

## 7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

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.

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing body.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the Child protection and safeguarding 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
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	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

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

<b>Approved by:</b>	Linda Matthews Headteacher	<b>Date:</b> January 2022
<b>Written by:</b>	Natalie Carroll Deputy Headteacher	
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