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# ATTENDANCE POLICY



## DOCUMENT CONTROL

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## Contents

Rationale and Terms of Reference.....	4
Policy Aim.....	4
Unavoidable Absence .....	5
Notifying Absences .....	5
Medical Appointments.....	5
Term Time Holidays .....	5
Punctuality .....	5
Monitoring .....	5
Celebration.....	6
Support .....	6
Fixed Penalty Notices (fines).....	6
Prosecution .....	6



### **Rationale and Terms of Reference**

This policy has been written to comply with Department for Education Advice (DfE) on school attendance and guidance from Wigan County Council

All young people between the ages of 11-16 are required to be in full-time education. From September 2013 all young people between 16 and 17 are required to be either in full time education or in training or in employment with training attached to it. This has risen to 18 in 2015.

Regular attendance to school is a key factor in determining a student's educational outcomes. Students whose attendance is 90% or above are extremely likely to realise their potential: nationally 73% of them will achieve the national benchmark of passes including English and Maths whereas the figures of those with attendance below 90% is 35%. It is estimated that a week's absence every year for five years results in a student achieving the equivalent of half a grade less.

### **References and link to other policies:**

- **Behaviour Policy**
- **Home School Agreement**

### **Policy Aim**

The aims of this policy are:

- To promote attendance
- To outline the procedures that the school uses in relation to attendance

### **Promoting attendance**

The school will promote good attendance in the following ways:

- By demonstrating a strong attendance ethos
- Having a clear policy on absence
- Using effective systems
- Using data to improve school and student performance
- Promote the importance of legal requirements to all staff, students and parents/carers
- Intervening early when individual student absence gives cause for concern
- Have support systems in place for vulnerable pupils
- Reward and celebrate good and improved attendance making the best use of additional support for those with greatest need

### **Parents'/Carers' Duty**

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually. There are only three reasons why a child may be absent from school:

- Ill health
  - Religious observance
  - Where school transport should be provided by the local authority but is unavailable
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### Unavoidable Absence

The Headteacher has the discretion to authorise other unavoidable absences including those for the following reasons:

- Medical/dental appointments
- Interviews for employment/further or higher education
- Agreed attainment tests e.g. music grades, driving test etc.
- Compassionate grounds e.g. bereavement
- Participation in elite sporting competitions or training

Only the Headteacher or nominated representative can authorise absence. Parents/carers do not have this legal authority. Requests must be made in advance if they are to be authorised. The only exception to this is when the request is made on compassionate grounds.

### Notifying Absences

The school operated a first-day call system. Parents/Carers are required to telephone the school before 8.30am on any day when their child is absent. If the absence is expected to last more than one day, the parent/carer should indicate the day of return. Parents/Carers will be contacted if they fail to do this as the school needs to be certain that the student is safe.

### Medical Appointments

Parents/Carers are asked to make all but emergency medical and dental appointment outside of the school day. If this is not possible, please give as much notice as possible of the intended appointment. Under certain circumstances appointment cards/letters may be requested before absence is authorised. If you need to collect your child from school for an appointment, he/she must sign out of the building and back in again when they return. If your child must attend a series of appointments during the school day, please ensure, where possible that the times and days of appointments are varied to avoid the same lesson being interrupted each time.

### Term Time Holidays

Parents/Carers are not legally entitled to take their child on holiday during term time. The law does not permit the Headteacher to authorise term time holidays or extensions to holidays which run into term time retrospectively. Parents/Carers will be fined by the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time unless exceptional circumstances are approved by the Headteacher.

### Punctuality

The school day promptly starts at 8.30am. Students are issued with school detentions on each occasion a student is late. If significant improvement is not seen over a specified period, parents/carers will be invited into school for a meeting. Poor punctuality could also impact on whether students are allowed to take part in trips.

### Monitoring

The school monitors attendance on a weekly basis. If a student's attendance falls below 95% it is a cause for concern. Depending on the reasons for the non-attendance, parents/carers may be sent a letter alerting them to the issue and inviting them into school to discuss the matter with a view to seeing how we can work in partnership to improve the situation. In cases where a student's attendance falls below 90%, or in circumstance of unauthorised absence, the school may refer the case to the Local Authority. Habitual lateness is also a cause for concern. The definition of late is where a student arrives to registration after the register has been taken. The attendance record will be coded 'L' for late. Our school registers are held open until 8.45am; however, students are expected



to be in registration for 8.30am. Sanctions for late arrivals are detailed under punctuality. If a student arrives late after 8.45am they will be recorded as an 'L'. Poor attendance and lateness after the registers close will result in legal proceedings being initiated including the issuing of a fixed penalty notice or an attendance order. The school has a statutory obligation to inform the Local Authority of any student who fails to attend regularly or has had ten or more days of continuous unauthorised absence.

### **Celebration**

Annual prizes are awarded to students with an exceptional attendance record.

### **Support**

The school offers a variety of different support to students and their families where attendance is an issue. This may include support from a form tutor, a mentor, coach, the school counsellor, a student PC, the pastoral team, the SENCO and Senior Team. In some circumstance the Educational Social Worker will be attached to the case work with the family and the school to improve attendance. The school also works with a variety of external agencies to support students who are absent from school and their families including Wigan LEA attendance team.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices (fines)**

The circumstances in which the school can issue a fixed penalty notice (fine) are determined by the Local Authority. Up to two fixed penalty notices may be issued per child per year. Notices will be issued by the Local Authority at the request of the school in the following circumstances:

- Early intervention to address unauthorised absence (where that unauthorised absence would meet the criteria for a prosecution under s444, 1966 Education Act)
- Unauthorised holidays in term time
- Unwarranted delayed return from an authorised absence (without school agreement)
- Persistent late arrival after the register has closed

The fixed penalty is £60 if payment is made within 28 days, but this rises to £120 if the payment is made within 42 days. Failure to pay a fixed penalty notice will result in fast track prosecution under section 444 Education Act 1996. **Fixed penalty notices are issued to all parents/carers who have parental responsibility for any child.**

### **Prosecution**

The parents/carers of a student who fails to attend regularly may be issued with an attendance order and may be prosecuted by the Local Authority if they fail to comply with it. Depending on the nature of the offence, fines can range up to £2,500.

Latest update on the statutory guidance can be viewed on DfE

[www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

## ABSENCE PROCEDURE (Issued to Parents)

Parents have a responsibility to contact the School as soon as possible on the first day of any absence. Please ensure you notify the School of any changes to your contact telephone numbers.

The parent informs the School about the absence before 8.30am, giving the reason and expected date of return to School. The School makes the decision whether to authorise the absence.

If no message is received on day one then the School will place a truancy call to the parent or carer on our records

If there has been no contact, by the latest day 1, then a home visit will be made by a member of the Staff team in the afternoon of day 1

If the attendance falls below 95%, please refer to Appendix 1

If the absence persists external support may be enlisted.  
A home visit will be undertaken

Unauthorised absence may result in a penalty notice being served/legal court proceedings

We aim for the highest levels of pupil attendance at all times.

Appendix 1

Absence - Escalation of Intervention

Stage	%	Action	Person involved	
Stage 1	>97%	Phone call to parent by the Attendance Officer informing them attendance is a cause for concern	Attendance Officer	EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER may become involved at any stage if requested.
Stage 2	>95%	Letter to parent informing attendance percentage has dropped below 95%. Attendance Officer will meet with parent and pupil	Attendance Officer	
Stage 3	>93%	Head of Pastoral meets with parent and pupil	Head of Pastoral	
Stage 4 Attendance Panel	>90%	PA Meeting with Headteacher, Deputy Head teacher, Senior Assistant Headteacher, Education Welfare Officer and representatives from other relevant agencies if appropriate (School Nurse, Police Community School Officer)	Headteacher SLT Education Welfare Officer Attendance Officer	
Fast Track		Action with the Local Authority/Court action Parents to be given documentation at the Attendance Panel of the Fast Track process/implications		
Penalty Notice – can be actioned at any stage.				