

# **Attendance Policy**

**West Cornforth Primary School**



## Attendance Policy

### West Cornforth Primary School

#### Document History Log:

<b>Author of document:</b>	K Costello	<b>Job role:</b>	Headteacher Attendance Champion
<b>Date document created:</b>	September 2024	<b>Approval by Governing Body:</b>	Sept 24

#### Annual Review History:

<b>Task</b>	<b>Date Reviewed</b>	<b>Reviewed by</b>	<b>Signatories</b>
First document review			
2 <sup>nd</sup> Review			
3 <sup>rd</sup> Review			
4 <sup>th</sup> Review			

#### Revisions Log:

<b>Revision</b>	<b>Date of revision</b>	<b>Reason for revision</b>	<b>Resulting version number</b>	<b>Signatories</b>

## Attendance Key Contacts

**Please find the details of those with overall responsibility for attendance, attendance support and attendance improvement within our school below.**

Name	Role	Contact details
Kathryn Costello	Head Teacher / Principal	westcornforth@durhamlearning.net
Kathryn Costello	Senior Attendance Champion	westcornforth@durhamlearning.net
Karen Crozier	Other staff with responsibility for attendance	westcornforth@durhamlearning.net
Dennis Ramsey	Governor with responsibility for attendance	westcornforth@durhamlearning.net

**If a pupil is going to be absent from school the person who should be informed is:  
School Office : 01740654315**

**If a pupil, parent or family is having difficulty with attending school and requires advice, help or support then they can contact:**

Name	Role / type of help	Contact details
Mrs Costello	Headteacher – attendance & pastoral support	01740654315
Miss Gregg	SENCO	01740654315

### **Help & Support**

Where help or support is needed with attendance the sooner school know about this, the quicker people can work together to support with this. Where needed this can involve other services to make sure that pupils and their families get the right support, at the right time from the right people.

### **Children Missing from Education**

If pupils whereabouts are not known following enquiries schools can legally remove pupils from the admission register (the school roll) after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that parents keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Pupils place in schools are at risk if whereabouts are not known. Children Missing from Education must be reported to the Local Authority and the matter may be treated as a safeguarding issue.

## **Introduction to our school attendance vision and ethos**

West Cornforth Primary School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils', improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Specific roles and responsibilities have been published in the [Working Together to improve school attendance statutory](#) guidance.

We recognise the link between regular attendance and the well-being, development and achievement of our students / pupils. We expect everyone to attend every session they are able to, to benefit from the learning and pastoral opportunities and support we offer.

Communication is vital to ensure we are able to work with our parents and pupils and support attendance.

We ask that parents check the contact details, address and emergency contact information held by the school are up-to-date are communicated to school as soon as possible as it is extremely important school can contact parents in an emergency, keep parents informed of events and progress or discuss any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

### **The school day**

The school day is from 8.45am – 3.15pm

Every morning, Mrs Costello will open and supervise the gate from 8.40 a.m to 8.50 a.m. A member of school staff is on duty from 8.40 a.m.

Registration for all children is at 8.45 a.m. For health and safety reasons children should not arrive at school before 8.40 a.m unless they are attending breakfast club which starts at 7.45 a.m. Attendees should use the hall door to enter the school. At the end of the school day, parents should wait at the front of the school until class teachers escort children out of the building.

Reception children use the top gate and Reception class door for entry into school from 8.40 a.m. each morning. Reception children should also be collected from the Reception class door at 3.15 p.m. Nursery children should be dropped off and collected from the nursery entrance (Sure Start building).

Registration is at 8.45am The register will close at 9.15am. Pupils must be in school to be marked present, otherwise another appropriate code will be used (Attendance codes appended).

Pupils arriving late for registration, but before the register has closed will be recorded as late (L code).

In line with government guidance the registers will close at 9.15am (no more than 30 minutes after the registration period ends).

Pupils who are not present before the register closes but attend during the session will be recorded as a U code unless the reason means another code is more appropriate. The U code is an unauthorised absence.

Arriving late to school can be disruptive and unsettling to the child and the rest of their class. Parents should contact Mrs Costello if there are any issues which are affecting a pupil's ability to attend school on time.

**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 in SIMs.

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

Parents will be informed initially by text message, followed by a letter if no improvement is seen.

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

Parents will be invited in for a meeting to draw up an Attendance Support Plan. This could be, for example, support for emotional-based school avoidance, signposting to breakfast club or organising a meet-and-greet. Our support could also involve outside agencies where appropriate.

**Term dates and planned Inset days**

Are available on the school website and are shared regularly on Clasdojo and in the school newsletter.

**Leave of Absence in Term Time**

Head teachers are expected to restrict leave of absence in term-time to the specific circumstances in [regulation 11 of the School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#). There is discretion to consider exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts, circumstances and background behind the request. Permission must be requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with completing the form which is available from the school office.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. If an application is not made for leave then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

**The DfE have stated that generally they do not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure or recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.**

### **On the first day of absence**

If a pupil is to be absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to contact the School by telephone providing a reason for the absence. If a pupil is absent from school and there is no contact from parents/carers then school will contact home to find out why the pupil not in school.

Appointments should be made outside of school time where possible. 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 should do.

### **Periods of extended absence**

If a child's absence continues beyond three 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 and take any relevant action in relation to assuring itself of the child's welfare.

### **No reason for absence provided**

If there is no contact from home then school will text and ring parents and also use Clasdojo to message. If there is still no response then this will become a welfare/ safeguarding concern and staff may conduct a home visit or contact the local police.

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).

Where 10 or more unauthorised absences are recorded in any 10 school week period the school must consider whether a penalty notice may be appropriate and if so will refer the matter to the local authority.

### **Absence authorisation**

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parent's provide medical evidence to support absences.

We want to support all our pupils to ensure they can access their education and will take a support first approach. This will sometimes require communications and conversations to better understand the circumstances which may lead to absence.

### **Promoting good attendance and punctuality**

In order to promote attendance and punctuality the school will give out a weekly trophy for the class with the best attendance. Further to this, any children who achieve 98- 100% attendance over each half

term will receive a certificate and prize in assembly. We also reward any children who have shown significant improvement in their attendance. We also run a weekly "In It to Win It" draw for all children who are in school on time every day. Attendance percentages will be shared with parents on a weekly basis on the school newsletter, at termly parents' meetings and also annual reports to parents will contain a record of individual pupils' attendance. Parents will be notified of their child's 100% attendance every Friday via text.

We also

- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools;
- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families;
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absences

### **Attendance data**

We rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

We will use data we have such as whole school, year group, form/class and individual pupil level to analyse for patterns of absence which may require some support to improve.

We will also consider different pupil cohorts such as all pupils, those who have free school meals, those with special educational needs or disabilities, pupil premium, children who have a social worker or are looked after etc to identify where additional support may be required.

We will use the information to inform what we do to support and aid discussions between staff, pupils and families.

We will monitor the data to understand the impact of what we do.

We will communicate information to parents, staff and other professionals such as early help, TAF, TAS etc

### **Absence concerns**

Parents may identify concerns about school attendance early if there is a change in child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, concerns should be shared with school so people can work together to ensure that school attendance does not decline. The earlier concerns are identified and shared, the quicker they may be resolved.

### **Persistent absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence



- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils whom the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

### **Severe absence**

Pupils who miss 50% or more of their sessions at school are severely absent

### **National framework for penalty notices and other legal intervention**

To improve consistency of practice across the country there is a national framework for penalty notices.

At the point where there are 10 unauthorised absence sessions recorded in any 10 school-week period, schools must consider if:

- further support is appropriate.
- support is appropriate but is not being engaged with.
- support is appropriate but is not improving attendance.
- support is not needed, such as in cases of term-time leave of absence.

If support is appropriate, this should continue.

If support is appropriate but is not improving attendance or is not being engaged with, then a referral for consideration of legal intervention should be made to the local authority. This can include, but is not limited to a Notice to Improve, an application for an Education Supervision Order, Penalty Notice or Offence investigation Interview (PACE caution).

If support is not appropriate, such as where a holiday in term-time has taken place, a referral for a penalty notice will be made. ([DCC - Penalty Notice Code of Conduct](#))

Penalty notices offer the opportunity to deal with an irregular attendance offence without the need to go to court. Penalty notices are issued at a rate of £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

There is an escalation policy which means that if a second notice is issued within a three-year period, the second notice will only be payable at the rate of £160. Further offences will not be eligible for the offer of a penalty notice and parents may be prosecuted in court. ([DCC - Penalty Notice Leaflet](#))

If penalty notices are not paid then a prosecution for the original irregular attendance offence will take place.

If convicted at court under section 444 of the Education Act for failing to secure the regular attendance of a registered pupil at school, a parent may be fined up to £1000 for each offence. If there is evidence that a parent knowingly failed to secure the attendance and there is no reasonable justification for this, they can be fined up to £2500 and/or face up to 3 months in prison, be subject to probation supervision or have a curfew imposed as maximum sentences.

**Pupils with specific needs**

This Policy should account for the specific needs of individual pupils and pupil cohorts, This Policy must be applied fairly and consistently and consider the individual needs of pupils/families who have specific barriers to attendance.

In development and implementation of the policy, consider obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**This policy is supported by our policies on:**

Safeguarding,

Anti-bullying,

Behaviour

**The school and all partners will work together to:**

**EXPECT**

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



**MONITOR**

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



**LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND**

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



**FACILITATE SUPPORT**

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



**FORMALISE SUPPORT**

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



**ENFORCE**

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

## **Expect**

We all want the best for pupils and therefore aspire to have the highest attendance possible for each individual to allow them to access the education on offer to them in a culture they feel safe, part of the community and where they want to be.

## **Monitor**

Data will be used to monitor, identify and support attendance to enable school to address concerns at the earliest opportunity using a support first approach.

## **Listening to and understanding barriers to attendance**

Mrs Costello is available in school to listen to any concerns which may be affecting attendance, and will communicate with parents where concerns are identified by school. Attendance is everyone's responsibility and led by the Senior Attendance Champion from the school leadership team.

## **Facilitate support**

The school intends to remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school and that this might include an early help or whole family plan where there are wider issues affecting attendance.

The school will:

- Build relationships with students and families to encourage regular school attendance.
- Analyse and use data and relationship knowledge to prevent regular absence.
- Using resources (School-based and external services) to intervene early with support.
- Use targeted support for persistent/severe absences.

## **Formalise support**

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners will work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract.

## **Enforce**

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance may be enforced where necessary through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.