

WEST DERBY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

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| Approved on: | 2 March 2016 |
| Next review date: | Summer term 2019 |
| Signed: | S Graham (Headteacher) |
| Signed: | A Webb (For and on behalf of Governing Body) |

Part A – Statement of Policy

West Derby School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

At West Derby we prioritise both attendance and punctuality as a means of improving educational performance, embedding lifelong habits and improving work/career prospects. We support and strive to achieve the attendance figure for all pupils of 97% (the minimum set by the LA) and use many incentives, strategies and interventions in our efforts to do so.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. For a child to reach their full educational achievement the highest level possible of school attendance is essential. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. School attendance is subject to Education law and this school attendance policy is written to reflect this and the guidance produced by the DfE.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Liverpool LA attendance targetsⁱ. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals. This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

West Derby School recognises that:

- Most students attend school regularly to learn, to socialise with friends and prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well as becoming rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and prosperity of the community
- There is a clear link between students' achievement and their level of attendance at school. We want all the students to achieve the very best they can and for this they need to be in school regularly
- Late arrival disrupts the education not only of the student who is late but also of others in the class
- It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their children attend the school
- Some students and their parents/carers may need to be supported at times in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities

Part B – Roles and Responsibilities

Expectations:

All students will:

- Arrive by 8.45 am, appropriately prepared for the day, and go to form registration
- Attend school regularly, and for the whole school day, until 2.55 pm
- Inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that affects their attendance at school

All our students' parents/carers will:

- Ensure their children attend school every day unless they are too ill to attend or there is an acceptable reason for absence
- Ensure their children arrive on time, prepared and equipped for the day
- Inform the school's Main Office (0151 235 1300) on the first day of absence, if their child is going to be absent
- Communicate with school about their children's progress and attend meetings such as Parents' Evenings

West Derby School will:

- Provide students with appropriate education
- Respond to concerns raised by both students and parents/carers in a prompt, fair and proper manner
- Send a 'Keep Kids Safe' 1st day of absence text at 9.30 a.m. if there has been no parental contact. A further text will be sent at 1.30 p.m. if still absent and no response.
- Follow the procedures of school and the Education Welfare Service in dealing with attendance issues
- Monitor all attendance issues and report termly to the Pupil Welfare and Guidance Governors Committee

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

The main people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs S Graham, Headteacher

Mrs S Lorder – Senior Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral Leader)

Mr Parkinson, Assistant Headteacher, Strategic Lead for Attendance

PPLs: Mr Moore, Mrs Stephens/Miss Dudley, Mr M Thomas, Mr R Warwick,

Assistant PPLs Mrs L Swale, Miss S Ellis, Mrs S French, Mrs J Burden, Mrs N Evans,

Mr D Feeney, Head of 6th Form

Mrs M Deakin – Attendance Officer

Part C – School Procedures

Categorisation of Absence

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the Headteacher or a designated member of staff acting on her behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons absent from school for a legitimate reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable reason.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. This type of absence can lead to intervention using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Unauthorised absences include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have not been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time.

Registration

The register provides the daily record of attendance of all students. It contributes to a student's Full Report, record of achievement and references. It is a legal document that may be required in a court of law as evidence, for example, in prosecutions for non-attendance.

The School uses SIMS for keeping the school attendance records.
The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

| CODE | DESCRIPTION | MEANING |
|------|--|-----------------------------|
| / | Present (AM) | Present |
| \ | Present (PM) | Present |
| B | Educated off site (NOT Dual registration) | Approved Education Activity |
| C | Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) | Authorised absence |
| D | Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment) | Approved Education Activity |
| E | Excluded (no alternative provision made) | Authorised absence |
| F | Extended family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| G | Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement) | Unauthorised absence |
| H | Family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |

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|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| I | Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments) | Authorised absence |
| J | Interview | Approved Education Activity |
| L | Late (before registers closed) | Present |
| M | Medical/Dental appointments | Authorised absence |
| N | No reason yet provided for absence | Unauthorised absence |
| O | Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description) | Unauthorised absence |
| P | Approved sporting activity | Approved Education Activity |
| R | Religious observance | Authorised absence |
| S | Study leave | Authorised absence |
| T | Traveller absence | Authorised absence |
| U | Late (after registers closed) | Unauthorised absence |
| V | Educational visit or trip | Approved Education Activity |
| W | Work experience | Approved Education Activity |
| X | Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y | Enforced closure | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Z | Pupil not yet on roll | Not counted in possible attendances |
| # | School closed to pupils | Not counted in possible attendances |

Lateness

School begins at 8.45 am. Any pupil arriving after this time will receive a late mark unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. public transport was delayed. In cases, for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered. Afternoon registration takes place in Period 4 of the school day. Registers are also taken in every lesson. When a student arrives late to school, they will automatically be placed on detention at the end of that same school day.

Weekly Checks

The Attendance Officer, along with the PPL/PPL assistant, monitor attendance each week. Individual issues are identified, discussed and a plan of action decided upon. This will often entail visits home by our Attendance Officer, parents being invited into school, warnings of fixed penalties etc. Persistent absenteeism could also result in LA intervention by the EWO.

Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence are kept in the pupil's file which is kept for the duration of his time with us.

Absence for family holidays in term time

Only the Headteacher has the right to authorise any absence from school. There is no automatic right for parents/carers to take a holiday during term time. Parents/carers should use existing school holidays for holidays/trips abroad. Any absence for a term time holiday may result in a fixed term penalty notice if in addition to less than acceptable attendance.

If leave of absence is taken without consultation and school authorisation, then the absence, by definition, is unauthorised. This may result in referral to the Education Social Work Service and a subsequent issue of a Penalty Notice.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and Attendance Officer.

All PA cases are under the referral of our Attendance Officer and made known to the Local Authority. The school also has a cohort of pupils identified as those pupils in danger of becoming a PA pupil. The attendance of PA pupils is closely monitored. We monitor all attendance through designated groups i.e. PP, Non-PP, SEN etc.

The Attendance Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at the earliest opportunity and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance Officer and our EWO. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, she will use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. The EWO is independent of the school and will give impartial advice and can be contacted through the school office.

Pupil Groups

Attendance data for the following groups is held in the system and analysed on a weekly basis;

- All groups
- Male FSM
- Non-FSM
- White British
- EAL
- SEN
- SEN with EHCP
- Non-SEN
- Disadvantaged
- Non-disadvantaged

Strategies to Improve Attendance

West Derby School has a system to monitor attendance, to celebrate good attendance and to encourage better attendance continually.

Each term the school will contact all parents to inform them of their son's attendance and punctuality record, including minutes late.

Pupils are rewarded for good attendance and punctuality through various ways which include:

- £10.00 monthly draw for pupils with 97% attendance and above. One draw per year group.
- Half termly breakfast in Café West. Best form group.
- 100% attendance prize draw.
- Termly attendance certificates : Bronze, Silver, Gold.

Part D – Roles and Responsibilities

Expectations:

Subject Teachers are expected:

- To create a positive learning atmosphere in their lessons and encourage pupils to attend well and achieve
- To enter accurate information on pupil attendance and punctuality into the SIMS system on a lesson by lesson basis
- To liaise with PPLs and their assistants over any pupils giving cause for concern over attendance in lessons

Form Tutors are expected:

- To register accurately onto the SIMS system the attendance of their Form Group at am registration
- To develop a positive, welcoming climate within the Form Group to help promote good attendance
- To praise/recognise good attendance of individual pupils
- To raise concerns regarding absence/punctuality with individual pupils and to share these concerns with the PPL
- To comment on attendance/punctuality on the annual written report to parents
- To share attendance through 'Class Chart' online system

Heads of Subject are expected:

- To create a positive, inclusive climate within their subject areas to encourage pupils to attend well and achieve
- To strive to ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all pupils

Pupil Progress Leaders are expected:

- To lead a team of Form Tutors and an Assistant PPL in the monitoring and implementation of strategies to improve pupil attendance
- To meet with the Attendance Officer on a weekly basis to discuss attendance issues and draw up plans of action for individual cases
- To highlight attendance issues at the weekly Year assembly, celebrating successes and encouraging others to follow suit
- To organise the rewards for good attendance
- To liaise with Heads of Department and subject teachers over individual pupil attendance issues
- To identify suitable pupils for TAC/TAS meetings

Assistants to PPLs are expected:

- To assist the PPL in all elements of the pupil attendance policy
- Management of calls/texts to parents / carers developing positive relationships - follow up letters to home when this has been unsuccessful
- To meet with the Attendance Officer to discuss attendance issues and draw up plans of action for individual cases if the PPL is unable to be present

- To track pupil attendance lesson by lesson, identifying any 'internal' truancies and informing parents of any such incidence.

Assistant Headteacher, Strategic Lead for Attendance, is expected to:

- Drive whole school attendance strategy
- Steer Classcharts attendance monitoring initiative
- Implement rewards and sanctions strategies to drive forward attendance
