



## Westover Primary School

### Attendance Policy

<b>Prepared By</b>	Westover Primary School Headship Team
<b>Approved By</b>	Westover Primary School Governing Body
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*At Westover, we are passionate that every child, no matter what, has the opportunities to thrive and fulfil their dreams, contribute to their community as responsible, caring citizens and be ready for the world.*

## **Rationale**

In order to fulfil our vision, Westover Primary School aims to maximise attendance rates and secure high levels of punctuality in order to ensure that all pupils are able to take the fullest advantage of the learning experiences available to them. If allowed to remain unchecked persistent absence and lateness can significantly impact on a pupil's progress and achievement. Our partnerships with parents play a vital role in ensuring that this is achieved.

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (section 444) to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the education authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

## **Aims**

- To maintain and improve the overall attendance of children at school and discourage unnecessary absences.
- To comply with legal requirements.
- To improve children's attainment through good attendance.
- To encourage parents to ensure that children arrive at school on time.
- To make attendance a priority for all those associated with the school including parents, pupils, teachers and governors

## **Guidelines**

To encourage good attendance habits the school will:

- Promote a welcoming, caring and positive environment, where children feel safe and their presence valued.
- Meet legal requirements by identifying unauthorised absence.
- Ensure all staff are aware of the School Attendance Policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality in line with the recommendations of the policy.
- Check registers regularly, noting unexplained absences and identifying patterns of absence and lateness.
- Through this monitoring process, should absence or lateness become a matter of concern, parents will be contacted. If parents are having difficulties and need the support of external agencies, the

school will seek to support familiar with appropriate multi-agency referrals. If little improvement is evidenced, then a formal referral will be made to the School Attendance Team (SAT).

- Ensure information on attendance and punctuality is available to, and monitored by, Governors.
- Ensure information on children's attendance and punctuality is shared with parents and other agencies as appropriate.
- Keep accurate registration documents to include authorised/unauthorised absence.
- Acknowledge and acknowledge those pupils who have excellent attendance. The school and governing body will recognise when medical conditions prevent a pupil from achieving otherwise excellent attendance.

## **Responsibilities**

The school has a named senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance issues (Headteacher – Anthony Martin with administrator responsible for attendance – Linda Hayward). Members of school staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have responsibility for attendance issues in school. See **Appendix 1** for a detailed breakdown of roles and responsibilities. Attendance matters are reviewed by members of the leadership team. Attendance issues are reported termly to the Governing Body.

## **School Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing in Education**

A child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse or neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in the future.

School are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12.

The attendance lead and designated safeguarding leads should work closely to manage risks, ensure appropriate multi-agency engagement where necessary, so that children and young people receive the appropriate level of early help or statutory intervention to ensure they attend school regularly. **Appendix 2.**

## **Maintaining high standards of attendance and punctuality**

Parents are responsible for the child's level of attendance and punctuality.

The designated member of staff will check registers for regular attendance. They and the class teacher should report any concerns to the Headteacher. The register is a legal document and may be used as evidence in a Court of Law. Appropriate and consistent recording methods are used in line with local authority recommendations.

The school will liaise with the School Attendance Team (SAT) if any of the following apply:

- If attendance, due to the number of days' sickness and/or days taken as holiday falls below 90% in any academic year

- Contacts with home have not brought about any improvement in attendance
- Poor communication with home regarding explanations for absence or lateness
- A pattern of absence has been noted
- There is continuous unauthorised absences
- A child has a number of unauthorised absences
- A pattern of absence previously noted has continued
- Holidays

### **Referrals for non-attendance**

The SAT will become involved when:

- School has written to the parents explaining concerns over the level of attendance/unauthorised absence.
- A request for a Penalty Notice for Irregular Attendance or a meeting of the School Attendance Panel may be made to the School Attendance Team (Portsmouth City Council) at the discretion of the Headteacher

When a referral is made to the SAT, this is, in legal terms, a request for an investigation into whether the parents have committed a criminal offence; therefore, all aspects of SAT intervention may be used in legal proceedings. It is important that it is made clear to parents/guardians at the outset.

### **Punctuality**

Parents should inform the school in advance if they know their child will be arriving late at school.

Registration takes place at 8:55 am and pupils arriving after this time will be marked as late; pupils arriving after 9:15 am will be marked as unauthorised absence.

### **Attendance**

- The school expects regular attendance but aims to be supportive to parents who are experiencing difficulties.
- When a child is absent, parents should notify the school by telephone on the morning of the first day of absence.
- When a child is absent with explanation, a member from the office staff will contact the parent(s) of pupils as soon as possible by text, asking for the parent to report the absence. If a call is not received, a follow-up telephone call will be made. A record of the text and call will be kept.
- Notes, records of telephone, class and medical certificates will be kept by the office.
- The ultimate responsibility to authorise absence rests with the Headteacher. A note or telephone call does not automatically entitle an absence to be authorised.
- The school could request medical evidence when a child is absent for more than 5 consecutive days through illness or attendance drops below 90%.
- Where a pupils is absent without prior notification, an explanation is required. If one is not forthcoming, the absence will be treated as unauthorised. The school may seek further information from parents if necessary.

- Where an explanation for absence or lateness is not satisfactory, or where absence persists, the Headteacher may invite parent(s) into school to discuss any difficulties which may prevent a pupil from attending.

### **Request for Leave of Absence**

**There is no entitlement for a family to take a pupil on holiday in term time and this is actively discouraged.** All parents/carers must secure regular attendance of their child at school. Attendance and absence have to be recorded by the school. Absence without good reason will be deemed to be unauthorised by the Headteacher of the school. Parents/carers of pupils should be aware that unauthorised absences are considered to be a criminal offence by failing to secure a proper education for their child. The Local Authority will take action against those committing a criminal offence. This may be a fixed penalty notice or a summons to appear in court. If found guilty in court, a custodial sentence may result.

The Headteacher may authorise a child to be out of school for up to 5 days **in exceptional circumstances** but parents and carers must seek permission beforehand by either making an appointment to see the Headteacher or completing a parent request form for child out of school (Leave of Absence from School Form) at least 5 days before the date of the requested absence. **There is no entitlement for a family to take a pupil on holiday in term time and it is actively discouraged.**

- The Governors of Westover Primary School have directed that the Headteacher will not authorise absence in year 3 during May or during testing week in school for year 6 (currently May).
- Leave of absence in September is extremely disruptive to children settling into their new classes and as such exceptional circumstances is unlikely to be granted.
- All authorised and unauthorised absences will be noted on the child's school records and annual reports to parents.

### **What happens if the absence is unauthorised?**

Where a pupil has irregular attendance and the absences are unauthorised, the parents are committing an offence and could either be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecuted under s.444 of the Education Act 1996.

Westover Primary School

Roles and Responsibilities for School Attendance

Name	Role	Responsibilities
	School Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure compliance with relevant legislation</li> <li>• Setting attendance targets</li> <li>• reviewing school attendance</li> <li>• Agreeing and reviewing school policy</li> </ul>
Anthony Martin	Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with relevant legislation</li> <li>• Putting into practice school policy</li> <li>• Authorising/unauthorising school absences</li> <li>• Leave of absence requests</li> <li>• Line management</li> <li>• Contact with parents – overview of clear and escalating interventions</li> <li>• Responsible for links with the School attendance team</li> </ul>
Anthony Martin	Senior member of staff/ attendance lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with relevant legislation</li> <li>• Putting into practice school policy</li> <li>• Line management</li> <li>• Contact with parents</li> <li>• Responsible for links with the School attendance team</li> <li>• Data analysis</li> <li>• Contact with parents – overview of clear and escalating interventions</li> <li>• Recording and evaluation of interventions</li> <li>• Promoting school attendance</li> </ul>
Linda Hayward	Admin Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First day of absence contact</li> <li>• Late arrivals</li> <li>• Attendance targeting</li> <li>• Day-to-day responsibility for escalating approach</li> <li>• Maintaining registers</li> </ul>
All teachers	Class teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marking and registers</li> <li>• Promoting importance of regular school attendance</li> <li>• Providing early warning of attendance concerns – record on CPOMS</li> <li>• Positive role modelling</li> <li>• Follow policy and procedures</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2

### Children missing from education pathway

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff in education provision should follow the provision's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in the future.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential, pupils need to attend regularly. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing in their area.

All education providers should:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Ensure parents perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly
- Ensure all pupils are punctual to school and lessons
- Ensure they liaise with the named social worker where Children's Social Work are engaged with the child or family

### School requirements

The law requires schools to have an admission register and an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers. Schools should use the national absence and attendance codes to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collection statistics through the School Census System. The codes are detailed in School Attendance (DfE, October 2014 -

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/361008/Advice\\_on\\_school\\_attendance\\_sept\\_2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/361008/Advice_on_school_attendance_sept_2014.pdf)). Please note the requirements around the use of the L and U code (page 8), and requirements for recording attendance of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller pupils (page 11).

Schools should promote good school attendance and put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. It is essential that staff are alert to signs to look out for, and the individual triggers to be aware of, when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM, CSE, forced marriage.

### Involving other agencies and signposting

All schools must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent, without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority.

**Pupils at risk of harm/neglect** - Children may be missing from education because they are suffering from abuse or neglect. Where this is suspected schools should follow child protection procedures. If there is reason to suspect that a crime has been committed or the child's safety is at risk, the police should also be involved.

### **Families of members of the Armed Forces**

Families of members of the Armed Forces are likely to move frequently – both in UK and overseas and often at short notice. Schools and local authorities should contact the MOD Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) on 01980 618244 for advice on making arrangements to ensure continuity of education for those children when the family moves.

### **Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) Families**

Research has shown that many children from these families can become disengaged from education, particularly during the secondary school phase. Pupils are particularly vulnerable at transition from primary to secondary where a GRT pupil leaves school without identifying a new destination school. Schools should inform the CME (Child Missing in Education) team as soon as they become aware that a secondary school application will not be made for a GRT pupil. Although many are settled, some GRT families move regularly and their children can be at increased risk of missing education. Schools should work with families to minimise disruption to GRT pupils' education, for example if the family need to travel in order to work, they should be supported to dual register with other schools.

### **Persistent Absence**

The definition of persistently absent (PA) pupil as set by the DFE for 2015 - 2016 is a pupil with 10% or more absence (90% or less attendance). The table below, derived from the census guidance, gives an indication of the minimum number of sessions (1 session = ½ a day – am or pm) a pupil would miss by each half term to be classed as PA.

<b>Half term</b>	<b>10%</b>
Half term 1	7 or more sessions
Half term 1-2 (autumn term)	14 or more sessions
Half Term 1 - 3	20 or more sessions
Half term 1-4 (Autumn and Spring combined)	25 or more sessions
Half term 1-5	31 or more sessions
Half term 1-6 (full academic year)	38 or more sessions

### **Deletion of pupil from the admission register**

Schools must notify the local authority when they remove a pupil from roll in line with the Removing Pupils from Roll: Guidance for Schools.

All schools must inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system, e.g.: elective home education (EHE). Schools must not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding excluding the pupil or because the pupil has a poor attendance record
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered
- have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to school at the end of that period
- have been permanently excluded

## Glossary of Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>CME</b>	<b>Children Missing in Education</b>
<b>CPOMS</b>	<b>Child Protection Online Management System</b>
<b>EHE</b>	<b>Elective Home Education</b>
<b>GRT</b>	<b>Gypsy, Roma and Traveller</b>
<b>PA</b>	<b>Persistently Absent</b>
<b>SAT</b>	<b>School Attendance Team</b>