



ATTENDANCE POLICY (Students)

Reference this policy is aligned to with LCC	n/a
Agreed with Support Staff Trade Unions	n/a
Adopted by the Governing Body	
Next Review Due	September 25
Agreed with Teacher Trade Unions and Professional Associations	n/a

School Aim

Welland Park Academy provides a challenging and supportive environment, which positively encourages all students to attend all sessions.

We believe that good attendance is essential to educational success and aim to support students in developing positive attitudes towards punctuality and attendance, so that they may take full advantage of the learning experiences provided for them and be well prepared for life after education.

The Academy believes that attendance is everyone's responsibility. Regular attendance at school is the key to enabling students to maximise the learning opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who can realise their full potential, belong, achieve and make a positive contribution to their community. The school attendance target for students is 96%

Parental support

The Academy believes in working collaboratively in partnership with parents/carers. Where a student's attendance gives cause for concern, contact will be made between the appropriate staff and parents/ carers. Parents/ carers should be aware that absence from school may have a detrimental effect on their child's education. Interruptions to the complex learning process can lead to gaps in a child's knowledge and understanding, missed stages in the acquisition of a new skill and lost opportunities to share in and grow from new experiences.

Parents of registered students of compulsory school age are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends and stays at school; they risk fines or prosecution if they fail in this duty. Students are expected to attend for the full 190 days of the academic year unless there is a good reason for absence. Students cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

Absence

Absence is defined as:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

There are different types of absence:

Authorised: where the school approves student absence; only the school can authorise absences. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis provided that attendance is not below the Academy threshold.

Authorised absence will be considered, usually on a short-term basis, for occurrences such as:

- Child sickness
- Serious or critical illness of a close relative
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance
- Bereavement
- Wedding of an immediate family member
- An absence due to a family emergency

- Attendance at or in connection with a Children’s Hearing or Care Review

Unauthorised: where the school will not approve absence

Absence will not be authorised for events such as:

- Family holidays.
- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained or with a lack of evidence provided
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time
- Leaving school for no reason during the day
- Non-medical appointments
- Closure of a sibling’s school for training days

Persistent absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

Punctuality

Time:	Punctuality Action:
08:40am	Students expected to be in school. KS4 students via the back gate. KS3 students via the front gate.
08:40am	Gates closed and morning registration opens. Students arriving at school after this time will enter via reception, sign in and receive a late mark.
9.15am	All morning registration closed for collation by the attendance team. After this time students arriving late to school will receive a U mark.
1.10pm	Any students returning after lunch must be in reception by this time.
1.20pm	Afternoon registration opens. Students who arrive at Period 4 lessons after this time receive a late mark.
1.40pm	Afternoon registration closed for collation by the attendance team. After this time students arriving late to school will receive a U mark.

It is important to foster positive attitudes to arriving at school on time. Students who arrive late have a negative start to the day and may miss vital information given at the beginning of the day/lessons.

On arrival after the close of register, students must immediately report to the Academy front reception where the register will be amended to indicate the student is in school. This ensures that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are on site.

The school will regard punctuality with the utmost importance and sanctions are applied for lateness. These include but are not limited to detentions during social time, after school detentions and/ or more serious sanctions for persistent lateness. We do not require a parent/ carer’s permission to set and enforce a sanction, but will always inform them if an after school detention is taking place.

Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

Any student with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a student might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the Principal and Pastoral Team is notified and they will conduct a search for the student. If they cannot be found, they will contact the parent/ carer in order to assess the reasons behind the student not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents/ carers of the student, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- The time missed will likely be made up during social time or after school.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

Missing children

Students will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a student going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing student will inform 'on call' immediately
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- Available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the premises.
- If the pupil has not been found after 30 minutes, then the parents of the student will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the student, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- If the missing student has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the student has been located.

The Academy will take the appropriate action to ensure that students understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Positive Behavioural Policy.

Students at risk of persistent absence (PA)

The Academy will ensure it provides support to students at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing persistent absence, the SLT will work with the Attendance Officer:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Having a weekly tutor review.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.
 - Creating attendance clinics.

Where a student becomes at risk of becoming PA, the Academy will:

- Welcome the student back following any absence and offer catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meet with the student to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Lead weekly check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with the student's parent/ carer to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

Where a student at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the Academy will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social care, to support the student in line with the Academy's duty of care.

The Academy attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- Looked after children
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Children with a social worker

If they are persistently absent, students may be referred to the Inclusion Service who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Inclusion Service has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

Procedure

The procedures for monitoring attendance are outlined below. The Attendance and Pastoral Team work in partnership with all stakeholders and outside agencies to maintain high levels of attendance and support students who may be having difficulties which lead to absences.

- If a child is absent from school, parents should report absence via Edulink (absence report section) by 9-30am stating a reason. In the event of illness, the parent should report the absence daily via Edulink to inform them of the students' progress.
- A note of explanation and/or evidence should be emailed to student services (via Edulink) to support any absence from school.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 require schools to take an attendance register twice a day. Attendance registers for all tutor groups are completed at the beginning of each morning at 8.45am. The pm register is taken at the start of period 4.
- Returned registers are checked and any first day absences that are not accounted for are followed up by phone calls and texts home. By doing this we are secure in the knowledge that all our students are safe and where they should be. This will also enable us to enter the correct attendance code in the register.
- If we are unable to contact a child's parent or obtain a reason for the absence, it will be coded as unauthorised 'N'. Parents will be given **3** working days to reply to provide a reason. If we still have no contact, the absence will be changed to be recorded as unauthorised 'O'. Persistent non-contact over the three days will result in a home visit being carried out. External services may be contacted if it is still not possible to make contact.
- Students arriving late are required to sign in and their names passed on to the Attendance Team. All students that are late without an accepted reason will have a lunchtime detention on the same day. Failure to attend this detention will result in a longer afterschool detention on the same day. After 3 successive 'lates', students will serve an after school detention with the Senior Leadership Team in the first instance. After this, if this persists, the pastoral team will contact the parents/carers directly to discuss further sanctions.
- If a student arrives late after the close of registration, 9.15am they will be marked on our registers as a 'U'.
- Registers are also taken in every lesson.
- Parents are responsible to provide as much evidence as possible to support their student's long term absence (doctor's letters, appointment cards, agency letters etc.) Where the Academy has significant concerns regarding a student's repeated or lengthy absence due to illness, we will ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, for example, prescription details, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. In cases where there are concerns about the reported illness, the absence may be recorded as 'Unauthorised' until suitable evidence is provided. Any costs incurred in obtaining these will be the parent's responsibility.
- Application for Leave of Absence must be sought in writing from the Principal, prior to the event. From September 1st 2013, the amendments to the Education Regulations in relation to absence from school, give NO entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application must be put in writing to the Principal and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Holidays that are unauthorised will be recorded and may lead to a referral to the Leicestershire Court Team and a Penalty Notice being issued.

Monitoring attendance

- The Academy contacts parents by phone or text on the first day of any absence; if no reason is provided
- Students who are regularly late are overseen by the Attendance Team who will sanction in line with the Academy policy.
- Weekly absence summaries are monitored by the Pastoral Team.
- Attendance data is provided to the form tutor on a weekly basis and is monitored during tutor time where all students record their cumulative attendance on cards that they are expected to carry on their person at all times.
- Letters of concern are sent when a student's attendance falls below 96% or five days absence and an attendance target for the next six weeks will be set.
- A second letter will be sent after 10 days absence. Any further absences will not be authorised without medical evidence and will be coded as an 'O' which is absent from school without authorisation.
- In between letters parents/ carers will be contacted to discuss the Academy's attendance concerns and to alert to a further letter being sent out if attendance continues to fall.
- Further concern, either from no significant improvement in the student's attendance, or a high level of unauthorised absence, may result in one to one support sessions with the Attendance Team who will liaise with a Senior Leader and parents may be invited into the Academy to discuss the situation and agree an Action Plan.
- Students with attendance of less than 90% are considered to be persistent absentees. Attendance less than 50% is defined as severe absence and will be of concern to the Academy and the Local Authority.
- If persistent absence intensifies and the school's efforts to improve attendance are unsuccessful, the Academy will work in tandem with the Local Authority and other relevant partners.
- Where the needs are wider and a whole family response is more appropriate, a voluntary Early Help Assessment may be recommended.
- Where voluntary engagement in support is proving challenging the Academy will hold more formal conversations with parents/carers. This may mean that the matter will be referred to Leicestershire Inclusion Team for further support and/or the Local Authority Pupil Services Court Team for legal action. The Pupil Services Court Team have the statutory legal powers to address poor school attendance levels and will consider whether a case is suitable for attendance prosecution or a penalty notice or parenting contract, not as a punishment but as a means of enforcing attendance.
- A student may be removed from the school roll in accordance with government guidance. The school will adhere to the rules set out governing the grounds for removal from roll.

Rewarding good attendance

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance throughout the academic year.

School trips and events will be considered a privilege. Where attendance drops below 90 percent, these privileges may be taken away.

