Attendance Policy

Approved by: School

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1. **Scope of this Policy**
Regular attendance is defined to be in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school.
Supreme Court Ruling April 2017

Regular attendance is attendance at school on each day the school is open for the pupils unless there is an authorisable reason to be absent; (registration regulations 2006 (amended). Section 444 of the education act 1996). “If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.” A pupil’s Unauthorised Absence is an offence for the **parent**.

2. **West Acton Primary School aims**

- Promote and maintain maximum attendance and good timekeeping for all pupils
- Maintain a low rate of persistent absenteeism
- Maintain parents’ and pupils’ awareness of the importance of efficient and full time attendance and time keeping
- Help your child attain their full potential academically and socially
- Maintain an attendance rate of a minimum of 96%
- Have no significant gaps in attendance between different groups of pupils

3. **Good attendance is important because**
Statistics show a direct link between poor attendance and under-achievement and poor well-being.

- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying and settle into High school more easily
- Regular attendance encourages responsible learning habits and prepares children for higher education and for their work life.

4. **As a Parent/ Carer you can help us by**

- Ensuring your child attends school on each day the school is open for pupils, unless there is an authorisable reason to be absent. Only the School can authorise an absence
- **Contacting the school by telephone or email on each morning** of any absence to give us the reason and tell us when the child is likely to return to school
- Absence should only happen
  
  a) When your child is significantly/ systematically ill and therefore unfit to attend school. There should be an observable symptom; ‘feeling unwell/ ill or sick’ is not enough. We may ask for medical verification where absence claimed as illness is frequent, prolonged or where the absence is just before or after a weekend or school holiday
  
  b) Let us know if there is an unavoidable/ unforeseen reason or circumstance which is causing difficulty
  
  c) If your child has a documented medical condition that hinders regular attendance, please let us know
• Providing a timely reason; satisfactory to the school needs to be given for an absence; otherwise the absence will remain unauthorised
• Providing the school with documentary evidence of your child’s illness (prescription note or medication), if they have been absent for more than 3 days
• Arranging all non-emergency medical and dental appointments out of school hours or during school holidays
• Keeping the school updated by telephone, email or letter if your child has an extended period of absence
• Tell us if there is a change in your circumstances, if you are leaving the area or changing schools making sure we always have your current contact details; this includes all telephone numbers and emergency or other contact details.

5. West Acton Primary school will

• Contact you by telephone, text or email if you have not contacted us about your child’s absence. Schools have a safeguarding role so on occasion, home visits may be made by the school or Local Authority School Attendance Officer if a parent/ carer cannot be contacted.
• Let you know if we have concerns about your child’s attendance or time keeping.
• The school will express ‘a concern’ either verbally or in writing. If the attendance or time keeping does not improve or explanations for absence or lateness are unsatisfactory you may be invited to a meeting with the Attendance Officer or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. We will also outline what the attendance expectations are and what actions will follow, supporting you to help improve attendance or time keeping. You may be asked to sign a ‘Parenting Agreement/ Contract’. A referral may also be made to the Local Authorities School Attendance Services, whose officers visit the school regularly to review and support attendance and time keeping issues.
• Remind parent/ carers of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality via school literature, our website, at parents’ evenings, in our home school agreement and in your child’s end of year report.
• Acknowledge and reward good attendance and punctuality

Please remember that absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his/her learning, wellbeing and social development. A good understanding of the work and good progress can only take place when the child is in the classroom regularly and on time.
6. Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as “authorised absences”. For example: if a child is ill, has a hospital appointment, a school entry/music exam, family bereavement, or religious observance.

We realise that there are rare, unavoidable occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we will try to deal with it sympathetically. Following such incidents, parent/ carers are expected to make any arrangements for their child to return to school as soon as possible (ideally the next day). If the absence is likely to continue for more than a day, parent/ carers must write to the Headteacher outlining the reasons.

Please note when illness is used a frequent reason claimed for absence then the school will ask for evidence to further allow authorisation.

7. Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”. Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Waiting for a delivery or repair
- Going for a family day out/ shopping
- Interpreting or supporting a parent/ carer at a meeting
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Birthday
- Term time holiday
- Parent illness or sibling illness (other than in an emergency)
- Where there is no explanation for an absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory
- Absence following or prior to a period of school closure or authorised leave unless satisfactory evidence to justify has been provided
- Cheaper flights
- Travelling either side of a funeral or exam
- Visiting a sick relative
- Attending a wedding

Unauthorised absences are reported to the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service may contact you where unauthorised absence continues to be a problem. The school will then work with you until the matter improves.

**Unauthorised absence could result in a Fixed Penalty Fine or other legal action.** Sanctions for continued, unauthorised absence include warnings, penalty notices (fines) prosecution in the magistrates court or an education supervision order through the family proceedings court.

8. Persistent Absence

Once a child’s attendance falls below 90% for whatever reason, he/she is automatically defined by the Department for Education (DfE) irrespective of the reason for absence as a Persistent Absentee. This is a severe problem for pupils. Much of the work they miss when they are off school is never made up; these gaps in their learning leave children at a considerable disadvantage
for the remainder of their school career. Statistics show a direct link between poor attendance and under-achievement particularly at GCSE.

Such low attendance is well below our expectations and as such, the school will work in partnership with the parent to improve matters. In such cases, parents might be invited to agree to a 'Parenting Agreement/Contract/Attendance improvement Plan' with the school as a way of managing improvement.

9. Term Time Leave of Absence

We are always concerned about the amount of school time pupils miss because of family holidays. From 1st September 2013, the rules regarding term time absence were changed dramatically. There is no entitlement to time off in term time. Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the head teacher in accordance with this Attendance Policy, as agreed by the Governing body.

All term time leave requests must be submitted in writing by completing a Term Time Leave Request Form. This can be obtained from the school office. An application can be made if there are exceptional (and documented) circumstances. Parents/carers sometimes confuse telling the school/a member of staff as being good enough, this is not so, you will need permission from the Headteacher. Only in exceptional circumstances (e.g. if there is an emergency) will the Headteacher authorise term time leave in accordance with the school policy.

If you request leave in the days preceding and/or following a school holiday the Headteacher may request a meeting with you.

If a child is not present at the beginning of a school term, we cannot guarantee that their place will remain available on their return to school. You should make definite arrangements so that you return in good time. If you experience delays in returning from a trip within the UK or abroad for whatever reason, the school will require documentary evidence in English or translated accompanied with proof of original flight/travel return dates, e.g. tickets or travel documentation.

Please note that if you are unable to provide acceptable evidence or do not return back to school in due time, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and reported to the Local Authority School Attendance Team. As a result, you may be liable for a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action and in certain instances your child may also lose their school place. Any absences before or after a school holiday or weekend will require evidence in order to be authorised.

10. Punctuality

Good time keeping is pre-requisite to good learning and shows a respect between pupil, family and school.

- Late arrival after registration closes, without an acceptable reason can be marked as an ‘unauthorised absence’. Parent/Carers remain responsible for their child’s punctuality. Arriving late to school on a consistent basis can have longer-term academic effects: late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for the child. There are no late children only late parents/carers. If showing up late to school becomes a habit, children may develop the notion that lateness is acceptable behaviour. This belief can negatively impact their future work ethic and employment opportunities.
• Morning registration is at 8:55am. You need to aim for your child to come through the school gate at 8:45am at the latest.
• Arrival after the close of registration (particularly if the lateness is frequent or persistent and there is not an acceptable reason) will be marked as unauthorised absence code ‘U’ in line with the DfE guidance; this has the value of an unauthorised absence. When late arrivals are frequent or persistent we will want to discuss this with you.
• All lateness is recorded daily. The number of minutes late and the reason for lateness, if known, will also be recorded. This information can be made available to the courts in the form of a report should a prosecution be the outcome of repeated lateness.
• We will contact you if we have concerns about your child’s punctuality.

Please remember that absence caused by poor punctuality disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his/her learning. A good understanding of the work and good progress can only take place when the child is in the classroom regularly and on time.

11. Collection from School

School finishes at 3.15pm. Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day or from any after school activity. Our school Breakfast Club is available from 8.00am and Aktiva After School Club up to 6.00pm and is available in an emergency where you are unable to drop off or collect your child from school on time.

• Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to the school office and to share concerns with other agencies including the Ealing Children’s Integrated Response Service (formally Social Services).
• The school will put a child into the Aktiva after school club and provide the parent/Carer with the bill if they are persistently collected late or not collected by 3.45pm.

If your child needs to leave during the school day for an appointment, please inform the school office in advance. Evidence for medical or non-medical appointments during the school day will need to be provided where a child is withdrawn from class early and not returning, unless agreed by the Headteacher. Siblings should be taken to such appointments.

12. Leavers

If your child is leaving the school (other than to go to High School) parent/ carers are asked to complete a Notification of Leaving Form or email the school with the following details:

• Give the school detailed information about your plans; including any date of a move and your new address and contact numbers, your child’s new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to the school in writing. A leavers form is available from the school office which you should complete. (a destination country or named Local Authority is not sufficient).
• When a child leaves and we don’t have information about where they have gone/ will be educated, then he/she is considered to be a ‘Child Missing Education’. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Ealing Children’s Integrated Response Service (formerly Social Services), the police, benefits/ council tax records and other agencies, to try to locate your child. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.
13. Withdrawals

- Parents who remain a resident locally can only withdraw their children from school if they have a confirmed start date at another school or are undertaking steps to educate the child at home (Home Education). If the latter, this must be confirmed in writing to the school by the parent. Pupils remain registered at the school until such conditions are satisfied.

14. Celebrating attendance and punctuality

We have reviewed and updated the way we celebrate attendance, to be inclusive and mindful of all and will therefore be motivating improved attendance and rewarding great attendance. The following systems have been put in place (subject to change and review according to trends/needs):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Termly</th>
<th>Annual</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Mascot/ Trophy for the highest attendance &amp; punctuality</td>
<td>On display - Highest Class attendance &amp; punctuality certificate</td>
<td>Rewarding great attendance: Awards: Bronze – where attendance is between 96% &amp; 97% (attendance sticker)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mascot for EYFS, Years 1, 2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>Discretionary - Postcards sent home for improved attendance and punctuality (individual)</td>
<td>Silver – where attendance is between 98 &amp; 99% (certificate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trophy for Years 4, 5 &amp; 6</td>
<td>Discretionary - Motivational stickers where improvement and effort is seen (individual)</td>
<td>Gold – attendance is 100% (certificate &amp; pencil)</td>
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<td>End of Year Tea Party with the Headteacher (parents /carers invited)</td>
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15. Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full-time attendance at school of registered pupils of statutory school age (Education Act 1996). This is the legal requirement. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine).

This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the DfE (Department for Education) and the Local Authority.

We value your support in helping us to maintain the high standards to which we always aspire.

“Every day counts and Every Child Matters!”
Good Attendance Means...
being in school at least 96% of the time. This means 8 Days Off!

175 non school days a year!
All this time for shopping, holidays and appointments

365 days in the calendar year

190 School days in each year
8 days absence
182 days of education
19 days absence
171 days of education
29 days absence
161 days of education
38 days absence
152 days of education
47 days absence
143 days of education

100% attendance
96% attendance
Best Chances of Success
"Well Done"
90% attendance
Poor attendance - less chance of Success
"I’m Worried"
85% attendance
80% attendance
Very poor attendance - serious impact on education and reduces life chances
"I’m seriously concerned"
75% attendance