

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy adopted by the Governing Body of The Wordsley School	
Date adopted by the Governing Body	10th July 2025
Signed by the Chair of Governors	M Kershaw

Introduction

At The Wordsley School we believe that regular attendance is crucial for every child to have the opportunity to reach their full educational potential. Our admissions policy offers equal access and opportunities to all. We believe that school attendance is a shared responsibility involving school, pupil, parent/carers and other relevant agencies.

There is a strong statistical link between good school attendance and pupil achievement. It is proven that attainment is connected to good school attendance and missing school could have an impact on a pupil's education.

It is a statutory government requirement for all pupils from year 7 to year 11 to attend educational provision regularly and on time. The aim is for all our pupils at The Wordsley School to achieve above 98% attendance wherever possible.

If a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, they will be deemed a Persistent Absentee and the Local Authority may be notified. The Wordsley School reviews attendance on a daily basis and intervention will be offered to prevent the pupil becoming a Persistent Absentee.

How can I help my child attend school?

We believe that good attendance begins at home.

Below are some ways that you can support your child to attend school every day.

- Take an interest in their learning. Know their timetable and support them with getting their equipment ready each evening
- Make sure your child understands that you do not approve of unnecessary absence from school.
- Encourage your child to avoid unnecessary absence, for example, by taking time off due to minor illnesses that could be managed in school.
- Do not be tempted to 'cover up' for your child if they are taking time off school for a reason that you do not agree with – be honest with us and talk to us about what support we may be able to provide.
- Avoid taking holidays/leave of absence during term time.
- Arrange medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is not possible, please support their learning by ensuring they attend school before and after the appointment.
- Contact the Attendance Team if your child is experiencing issues that are preventing regular attendance.

Why Is Regular Attendance Important?

Learning:

Good attendance is learnt behaviour. Children with the highest attendance achieve highest attainment and have wider opportunities and life chances. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's school and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

The Law Relating to Attendance

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is the registered parent/carer responsibility. If a child fails to attend school regularly the parent/carer can be held accountable and be prosecuted as per legislation set out under the Education act 1996.

The two offences are:

- Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 - a fine of up to £1,000.
- Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996 - a fine of up to £2500 and the court can also sentence them to up to 3 months imprisonment.

The Local Authority can also issue sanctions for general absence and leave of absence by issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine).

Safeguarding:

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of our school, we will adhere to 'Working together to Safeguard Children' (July 2018) Keeping Children Safe in Education and our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Acting to enable all children to have the best opportunities and life chances.
- Detecting early support through our school support strategies or an Early Help Assessment.

The Law Relating to Safeguarding:

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on Local Authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State regarding safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Aims

The Wordsley School is committed to meeting its obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance 2024, through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance. These include:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- Promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education (DfE's) working together to improve school attendance 2024 and school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996.
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002.
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments).
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping children safe in education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at The Wordsley School.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices where necessary.
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels.

The Designated Senior Lead Responsible for Attendance

The Designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

- Leading and improving attendance across The Wordsley School.
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong overview of attendance data and data analysis.
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Liaising with pupils, parents and external agencies, where needed.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

The designated senior lead for attendance is Mr R Howse. Mr Howse can be contacted by calling 01384 816015.

The Attendance Team

The school Attendance Team consists of a Pupil Welfare Manager, Attendance and Admissions Officer, and Family Liaison Officer. They are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system using the correct codes.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher.
- Working with the wider team such as Pastoral Support Leaders to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the Headteacher when fixed-penalty referrals have been made.

Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes and submitting this information on the schools MIS system at the beginning of each lesson.

Teaching Assistants

Teaching assistants are responsible for supporting pupils who need additional help to develop their social, emotional, and behavioural skills, or to improve their attendance and punctuality.

All Staff

All staff (teaching and support) at our school have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. **All staff have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality. This is now part of the National Standards for Teachers and National Standards for Teaching Assistants:**

- Actively promote good attendance to pupils and their families.
- Ensure the attendance team are kept up to date with any issues which may affect attendance.
- Ensure they are following the correct procedures for monitoring and recording attendance in registration periods.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend every timetable session on time.

Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually.
- Inform school of any reason for lateness and expected time of arrival.
- Contact school before 08.45am on the first day of absence to inform school of the reason for absence and the length of time it is anticipated they will be absent.
- Ensure that unless necessary, any medical or dental appointments in respect to their child are made outside of school and when this is unavoidable evidence of these are provided to the school.
- Ensure their child attends school prior to or after any unavoidable medical appointments.
- Co-operate with school staff and respond to calls and correspondence in relation to their child or children.
- Positively engage with and inform the school of any problem which may hinder their child's attendance to school. The Wordsley School can arrange for support via the school Nurse, if required.
- Keep all contact details held in school up to date.
- Provide school with more than one emergency contact for the pupil.
- Avoid booking holidays during term time.

Registration of Pupils

Pupils are expected to arrive on school premises by **8:30am** to ensure that they are punctual for the start of the school day.

The morning register will be taken at **8:35am** and will be kept open until **9:05am**.

We will take an attendance register during morning registration each school day, and within the first 5 minutes of each of our 4 Periods. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity.
- Absent.
- Unable to attend due to exception circumstances.

See Appendix 01 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not.
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The register will be taken through the SIMS Attendance Module or ClassCharts. It is the responsibility of the Form Tutor, Subject Teacher or Other Designated member of staff to ensure that a true record is entered and recorded. A paper copy of the register will be taken if an electronic version is not possible to complete.

Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence as soon as practically possible by calling the main reception.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, we may ask the pupils parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Managing Illness During the School Day

If a pupil is unwell or has an accident and the decision made by the school is that the pupil is considered unfit to continue in lessons, parents/carers will be contacted to collect their child from reception. In exceptional circumstances emergency services may be contacted due to the welfare of the pupil and parents/carers will be informed as soon as is reasonably practical in the circumstances. Any pupil who is sent home ill, the parents/carers will still be required to contact the school on any following days with updates regarding to the reason as to their child's absence.

Note. Any pupil that feels unwell during the school day must visit first aid and it is the decision of the school as to whether a child is ill enough to be sent home.

Managing Education Off School Site

On occasion pupils may be involved in educational activities off the school site such as field trips. If a pupil fails to attend any education off site, it will be treated in the same way as if the pupil was in school regarding authorising or un-authorising the absence.

Truancy

Pupils are not allowed to leave the school site at any time during the school day including break and lunchtime. Any pupil leaving the school grounds during the school day must be collected by the parent/carer or by an adult who has been nominated by the school.

Regular lesson checks are made to identify truancy. Any identified truants will be investigated, and parents/carers will be contacted, and sanctions will be in line with those outlined in The Wordsley School Behaviour policy. Parents/carers may be required to attend a meeting at the school depending on the nature of the truancy.

Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives to form or the class room before the start of a lesson will be rewarded with 'Punctuality Points' which can be used towards earning 'Punctuality Privileges'.

Pupils punctuality will be monitored by the Attendance Team. When patterns of lateness begin, a phone call will be made to parents/carers and a letter explaining the impact of lateness will be sent home.

Poor punctuality will be considered when authorising trips and visits and persistent lateness will also prevent pupils from qualifying for 100% attendance awards. Persistent lateness has a large impact on progress in the classroom e.g. 10mins late per lesson equates to a whole lessons worth of learning being lost each day.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

If a pupil is persistently late to school, the school may have no alternative but to make a referral to the Education Support Service (ESS).

Following Up Unexplained Absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Send a text message following the close of the register to determine the reason for absence.
- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the Police and ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving The Family Liaison Officer.
- Where a pupil has been absent for 2 days without a reason being provided by their parent or guardian, a home visit will be conducted by our Family Liaison Officer. Pupils who are persistently absent will receive a home visit after 1 day of unexplained absence.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance.
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, the school may refer to the local authority.

Reporting to Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are legally responsible for making sure their child gets a full-time education, either in school or through other suitable arrangements.

We will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via written reports and ClassCharts.

Approval for Term-Time Absence

Parents/carers should avoid taking holidays/leave of absence in term time unless there is exceptional circumstance. Parents/carers must notify the school at least 4 weeks prior to travel by completing a Leave of Absence Form. There have been occasions where parents/carers have taken holiday without notifying the school or said their child is off due to illness.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and amendments to the governments Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make clear that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any period of absence taken will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrate's Court. Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

- If a parent/carer is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave soon that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parents/carers or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts, or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (with evidence).
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's/carers religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart for religious observance.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for Page 12 of 19 occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

Legal Sanctions

The Wordsley School or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

From August 2024 the National framework for penalty notices for absences has been updated.

First offence

The first time a penalty notice is issued, the fine amount will be £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within the first 21 days.

Second offence (within 3 years)

The second time a penalty notice is issued, the amount will be £160 per parent, per child, payable within 28 days. The lower rate is not an option.

Third offence and any further offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed, a penalty notice will not be issued, and local authorities will need to consider other available measures to address the absence concerns. Parents found guilty of an offence under s444 (Education Act 1996) can be fined up to £2,500 and will have a criminal conviction.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year.
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission. Where a suspended pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

The ESS will ensure that the rights of the individuals affected are not compromised by complying with Article 6 and 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998. The issue of a Penalty Notice affords parents/carers the opportunity of discharging their liability to conviction for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

The local Authority also have the powers to prosecute parents as per legislation set out in the Education Act 1996, Section 444 (1) and receive a fine of up to £1000 or Section 444(1a) and receive a fine of up to £2500 or up to 3 months imprisonment.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

It is important that good attendance is acknowledged, celebrated, and rewarded. Achievement in attendance is as important as achievement in subjects and this is embedded within the ethos of our school.

For the policy and procedures to be effective, it is important that all concerned play an active role and contribute to the partnership, i.e., parents/carers, pupils, and teachers:

- The school will write to parents/carers when their child's attendance begins to fall.
- If absence deteriorates further, a letter to parents/carers will be sent reiterating attendance concerns.
- The school may request that medical evidence is provided for any future absences to be authorised.
- Parents/carers may be invited into school for meetings to discuss attendance and what support that can be implemented.

- If there are two or more continuous school days of absence without the pupil being seen in school or those whose absence is an immediate cause for concern, the school may carry out an informal home visit to complete a safety and wellbeing check.
- If after a period of ten continuous school days, no reason has been provided the absence will then be unauthorised and a referral to the Children Missing Education department will be made.
- If a pupil accrues 5 full days unauthorised absence within a rolling period of ten weeks the school may refer to the ESS which could lead to prosecution and/or a fixed penalty notice.

Attendance Monitoring

The Wordsley School will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly, and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether there are groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The Wordsley School will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

The school will monitor pupil absence and information may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if pupil's attendance is a cause for concern. A traffic light system is used to report to pupils on a weekly basis and parents/carers on a termly basis of how well their child is attending. Below is an explanation of the colour coding system:



Green: pupils with attendance 96% and above (attendance will be celebrated) These young people will almost certainly achieve the best progress grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will also get into a habit of attending school which will help in the future

Amber: Pupils with 95-94% (pupil's attendance will be closely monitored). These pupils are less likely to achieve their target grades and will start to find it difficult to maintain a habit of attending school regularly. Pupils who take a 2-week holiday during term time every year can only achieve 95% attendance

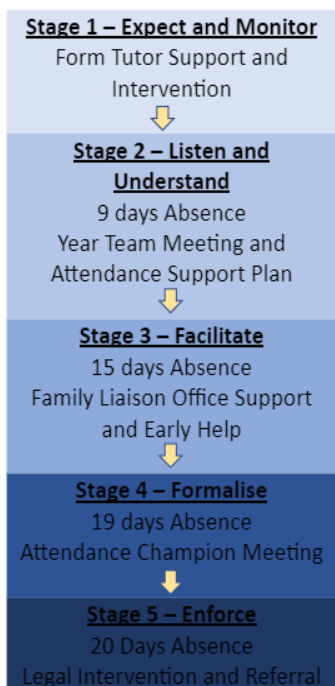
Red: Pupils with attendance below 94%. The Wordsley school recognises that poor attendance can be a poor indication of difficulties in a pupil's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents/carers should make the

school aware of any difficulties that may affect their child's attendance. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

Support

The Wordsley School also recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, and looked after children.

Attendance and Absence Flow Chart



We aim to support all pupils and their families towards achieving excellent attendance and if a child's attendance begins to fall they will be supported at different stages of our 'Attendance and Absence Flow Chart'.

If a child's attendance continues to fall they will further be supported by their Head of Year, Family Liaison Officer, and Attendance Champion through attendance support plans, meetings and external agencies. It is important that all parties involved adhere to these plans to help improve the attendance of the child.

A child's attendance below 90% (20 days lost learning) is classified by the Government as a Persistent Absentee and will prompt a Stage 5 intervention. Although we aim to avoid this, if there is non-engagement from parents or guardians to help their child to attend school, the matter will be supported by the Local Authority and fixed penalty notices/fines may be issued.

Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents/carers and pupil.

If after contacting parents/carers a pupil's absence continues to rise, the school will consider involving the ESS.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school compares its attendance data to the national average, and shares this with Local Advisory Committee members.

Using Data to Improve Attendance

The Wordsley School will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils on a weekly basis.
- Provide daily attendance figures for Heads of Year and Pastoral Support Leaders to reward and encourage pupils.
- Provide regular attendance to class teachers, and other school leaders.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify and inform future strategies.

Reducing Persistent and Severe 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 Wordsley School will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who 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.

Children Missing Education

A pupils name can only be deleted from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006”.

If you move out of area and the distance is too far to travel to school, please notify us immediately. We advise you contact the admissions department (of the Local Authority where you now reside) as quickly as possible to obtain a new school place, as often places are limited.

All schools must notify their local authority when they are about to remove a pupil’s name from the school admission register. If your child ceases to attend school and we have had no contact from parent, we will deem this as a safeguarding issue. We will try to contact you and may undertake a home visit. We will then follow the Local Authority referral procedure for a child missing education before removal from roll.

Appendix 01: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved educational activity
K	LA arranged provision at a place other than a school	Approved educational activity
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity
W	Work experience	Approved educational activity
C	Absent with leave (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
C1	Absent due to participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence
C2	Part-time timetable	Authorised absence
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J1	Interview	Authorised absence
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence

D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
Q	Lack of transport or boarding access arrangements arranged by LA	Not counted in possible attendances
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y1	Transport normally provided by LA or school not available	Not counted in possible attendances
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel due to local, national or international emergency	Not counted in possible attendances
Y3	School partially closed	Not counted in possible attendances
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Not counted in possible attendances
Y5	Pupil in criminal justice detention	Not counted in possible attendances
Y6	Travel or attendance contrary to public health guidance or law on transmission of disease	Not counted in possible attendances
Y7	Unable to attend due to unavoidable cause	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils (planned closure)	Not counted in possible attendances

KEY

Present
Approved Education Activity (Present)
Authorised absence
Unauthorised absence
Not counted in possible attendances

