



# Whitby School

## Pupil Attendance Policy

### Governance Status

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner, when appropriate, for example, if new guidance or relevant legislation is issued.

<b>Review dates</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Approval date</b>
November 2024	Staff and Governors	February 2025

**Signed by the Chair of Governors**

## **Principles**

At Whitby School, we are committed to ensuring that all parents/carers and pupils understand the absolute importance of high attendance for academic and social development. We aim to work in partnership with parents, pupils, all staff and governors to ensure that pupils are safe and learning. We aim to do this by creating a nurturing and secure learning environment which has the highest expectations of all pupils, so that they want to attend school and receive a good education.

Aims:

- To create high Levels of attendance and punctuality across the school, which are better than the national average
- To ensure that pupils are safe; securing parent/carer contact when they are absent so that the school knows (to the best of its knowledge) where the pupil is when absent.
- To monitor trends and patterns of individual, vulnerable pupils
- To work in partnership with parents/carers to support them and their child in establishing the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality; while offering appropriate challenge
- To ensure that all pupils have equal and full access to the best education that we can offer in order to improve their academic outcomes
- To ensure that parents/carers are aware of their legal responsibilities

## **Expectations**

### **The school is expected to:**

- promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled, and an atmosphere in school that is welcoming and supportive
- act early to address patterns of absence
- support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children attend regularly
- recognise and reward outstanding and good attendance and punctuality
- respond to any pupils' or parents' concerns which may impact upon that person's attendance or punctuality
- maintain accurate and regular records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality; ensuring that registers are taken for every lesson within the first 10 minutes, and that missing pupils are reported for safeguarding
- follow the pupil Attendance procedures
- as a safeguarding priority, contact parents when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain absence by 9.30am
- follow up unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers
- draw up a plan to maximise attendance in cases where there are long or frequent absences due to medical conditions
- monitor the attendance of pupils using the Tier System model and take appropriate action at the identified Tier thresholds

### **pupils are expected to:**

- attend school every day
- be on time for the start of the day and for the start of each lesson
- not leave the school site for any unauthorised reason

### **Parents/carers are expected to:**

- be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure their child(ren) attend the school regularly
- ensure their child(ren) arrives punctually at the start of the day
- contact school, daily, of an absence and explain the reason for the absence
- apply to the Principal in advance for a period of absence where there are exceptional circumstances
- notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details

- work with the school where there are concerns about a pupil's attendance to address those concerns
- not ignore, agree with or condone their child's truancy
- support school attendance by not taking family holidays in term time
- provide proof where there are genuine medical reasons for absence, in the form of a doctor's letter
- support the school by respecting any sanctions given
- attend a meeting in school for pupils whose attendance is of concern

### **How parents can work to encourage excellent attendance**

Ensuring that your son/daughter attends School every day is one of the most important things you can do to help them to succeed in their education. There are clearly documented links between regular attendance and attainment. All pupils should be aiming for 100% attendance and the support and encouragement of parents in achieving this is crucial.

### **Illness**

We understand that on occasions pupils may have to miss school due to ill health. On such occasions, we ask that parents:

1. Adopt a bracing approach to illness. Please only keep pupils off when it is absolutely necessary.
2. Contact us by telephone on the absence line 01947 601901, on the MCAS app or by email to [absence@whitbyschool.co.uk](mailto:absence@whitbyschool.co.uk) on the first day of absence by 8.55am indicating the expected day of return.
3. In cases of persistent or prolonged absence, we may require medical evidence, eg, a prescription or Doctors' note to explain the absence.

### **Medical Appointments**

Medical/dental appointments should be made out of school hours to prevent disruption to learning. Where this is not possible, please contact the School year office or write in your son/daughter's planner or supply appropriate evidence, eg, letter/appointment card to be handed in at the year office.

### **Leave of Absence**

Applications for 'leave of absence' during term time should only be made if absolutely necessary. The Government has made amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 which came into force on 1 September 2013. This states that parents/carers cannot demand leave of absence as a right. The regulations state that applications for leave must be made in advance by a parent/carer with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the School in 'exceptional circumstances'. Principals/Headteachers would not be expected to class any term-time holiday as 'exceptional'.

If parents take their children on holiday without permission, unauthorised absence will be recorded on their son/daughter's school record. This remains on the pupil's record and is monitored. Parents may also be issued with a fixed penalty notice; this is currently £60 for the first offence. Please note that both parents with parental responsibilities may be fined for each child out of school.

### **Religious Observation**

Christian holidays are already covered by the school's holiday pattern. Any additional requests should be made in writing in advance to the Principal. Without this, their absence will be classed as unauthorised.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

In addition to holidays taken in term time, penalty fines can also be issued to parent/careers of pupils who have a series of 10 or more unauthorised absences.

### **Punctuality**

Good punctuality is essential for pupils to progress in their education. pupils who are late miss learning opportunities and develop poor habits, resulting in them being unprepared for the world of work. pupils who are late for School will receive a detention. If lateness becomes habitual, we will ask parents to

attend an Attendance Panel Meeting. Fixed penalty fines may also be issued when pupils are persistently late.

We understand that buses and trains are sometimes late. This will always be taken into consideration and understood as an unavoidable lateness.

### **Failure to ensure regular school attendance**

Please note that the school takes its duty of safeguarding the welfare of all its pupils very seriously. As such, unexplained or extended absence, or a lack of contact from parents/carers may lead us to involve other agencies.

Whitby School will attempt to support all pupils to achieve maximum possible attendance and will inform parents/carers when attendance starts to fall.

- Where a pupil is failing to attend school regularly, an attendance action plan will be drawn up in consultation with the family, and possibly external agencies
- Where unauthorised attendance is falling to a level causing concern, parental meetings will be held to discuss ways to improve, and an Initial Warning Letter will be sent to parents/carers
- If attendance fails to improve after 10 days, then an Attendance Panel Meeting will be held
- After a further 20 days of monitoring, if there is no improvement, there may be another Attendance Panel meeting, or a PACE Panel meeting (Police And Criminal Evidence Act) chaired by the Local Authority

### **Penalty Notices, Education Supervision Orders, Prosecution**

The PACE Panel can recommend any of the following actions: a Prosecution in the Magistrates Courts under s444 (1) or (1A) of the Education Act 1996; a Penalty Notice being issued which is a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days; or an application made to the Family Courts for an Education Supervision Order under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989.

### **Encourage good attendance**

1. Whitby School reports will show your son's/daughter's level of attendance and punctuality record. We will clearly indicate if there is cause for concern.
2. We will hold regular 'Attendance Focus Weeks' in School where all pupils will be given up-to-date information about their attendance/punctuality and tutors will praise and reward pupils who have an excellent attendance record (100%) and will hold coaching conversations with those pupils who need to improve this.
3. Parents will be informed by letter/phone call if we have concerns about attendance and punctuality levels.
4. We will reward and recognise pupils with excellent attendance records.
5. In severe or persistent cases of poor attendance/punctuality, parents will be asked to come into School for an attendance and punctuality panel meeting which could lead to further action, for example, a fixed penalty fine, an Education Supervision Order being issued or court action.

### **Punctuality Sanctions Process**

The Pastoral Managers only deal with lates on official AM (P1) / PM (P5) registers. Teachers are to mark a pupil as late for the AM/PM register if they arrive **5** or more minutes after the bell for the start of the lesson. All other lates are the responsibility of subject teachers and Heads of Departments (HoD) to monitor and sanction.

Lates will be monitored daily over each half-term on the following basis.

There will be a 5-day rolling period, which will overlap into the following week. Each late for the AM/PM register will be dealt with in the following way:

If, at any time, the pupil has had 15 clear days or more with zero lates they revert to the beginning of the process. This process re-sets half-termly.

Any sanction should preferably be completed on the day of the late or, if this is not possible, then on the following day.

Ideally the cause/s of the poor punctuality will be identified by the Base Coach and addressed at the earliest opportunity by communicating with the pupil and their parent/s.

Poor punctuality should not be looked at in isolation, as it is often a symptom of other underlying issues. The majority of those pupils with persistent poor punctuality also have an assortment of other issues, including - poor attendance, poor behaviour, low academic attainment, PP, etc., which should also be taken into consideration when considering sanctions and support for the pupil.

### **Rewards**

Pupils who have good attendance/punctuality will be rewarded and an up to date attendance board will be in operation run by the Attendance Officer. Pupils who have 100% monthly attendance will be put in a draw to be drawn in assembly.