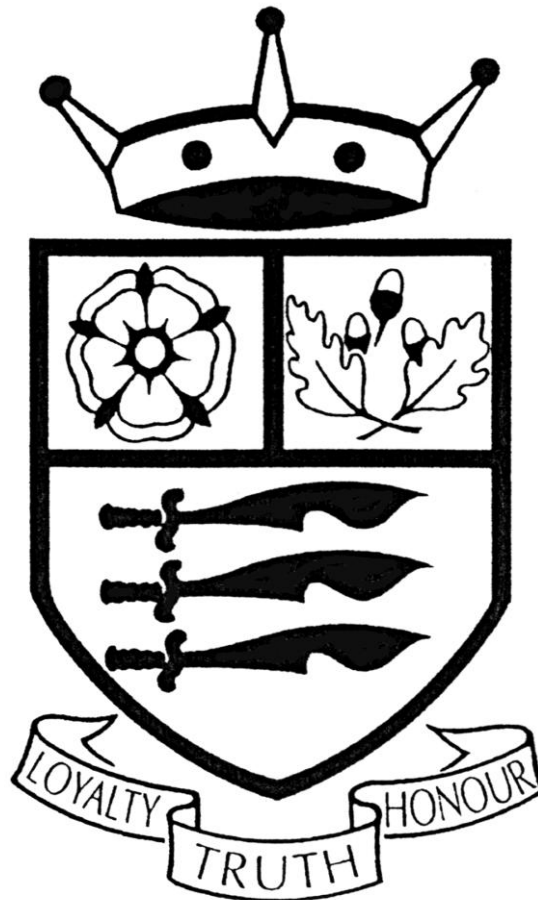


WEST LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

West Lodge Primary School

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the 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

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [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](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Whole school attendance information will be shared in the leadership report to governors for each full meeting of the board and monitored by the Governing Board. A more detailed analysis of attendance by pupil group (considering specific pupil case studies where necessary) will be delegated to the Governors' Quality and Standards Committee. The Designated Safeguarding Governor will monitor cases where there is a concern.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the 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

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs C Kinsella and can be contacted via the school office: office@westlodge.harrow.sch.uk.

3.4 The attendance officers

The school attendance officers are responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- 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 education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/senior leader responsible for attendance (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officers are Mrs Z Saunders and Mrs S Bharadia and can be contacted via the school office: office@westlodge.harrow.sch.uk .

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. The register is taken at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Registers are taken electronically and submitted to the school's management information system immediately

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Refer parents to the appropriate member of staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Report their child's absence before 8:30am on the day of the absence, by phone call or email message, and advise when they are expected to return
- Update the school about their child's absence on each day of absence
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time; pupils should arrive in school by 8:50am.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For all pupils, 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

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50am and will be kept open until 9:20am. The register for the second session will be taken immediately after the lunch break and will be kept open for 30 minutes.

4.2 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 by 8:30am, or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office on 020 8866 9836 or by sending an email to office@westlodge.harrow.sch.uk. The school should be notified in same way on each subsequent day of unplanned absence.

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, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as prescription, doctor's note 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.

4.3 Planned absence

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

For medical or dental appointments, parents must seek permission before the absence using the form in the appendices.

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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

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 has a pattern of lateness, this will be followed up by the attendance officer, pastoral lead and/or headteacher. In the event that a pupil is late for school on three or more occasions in a half-term or five or more occasions in one term, parents will be contacted in writing and punctuality will be monitored.

If a pupil arrives at school after the register is closed (9:20am), this will be reported as an unauthorised absence (unless a valid reason can be provided). In the event that a pupil is late after 9:20am for school on three or more occasions in a half-term or five or more occasions in one term, parents will be contacted in writing and punctuality will be monitored. If a child is persistently late' (8 unauthorised lates in one term), this will be reported to the Local Authority and an Education Penalty Notice (EPN) will be issued.

If a specific pattern of lateness is noticed, then this will be followed up by the attendance officer, pastoral lead and/or Headteacher.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- 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 or children's services.
- 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 – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- 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 LA attendance team
- If school absence exceeds 10 days, and there is no contact from parents to explain why this is, the school should refer to the LA's Children Missing from Education team.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels including an update at the termly parent-teacher meeting and a written report at the end of each academic year. Where a pupil's attendance is cause for concern, parents will be contacted on a more frequent basis by telephone, letter or email.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated, before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, barges (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Other valid reasons for authorized absence can be found in the School Attendance Guidance [Working Together to Improve Attendance](#)

The school will not grant permission for holidays, foreign travel or extended leave to be taken in term time.

5.2 Legal sanctions

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

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices will be issued by the local authority, when requested by the Headteacher.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- 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 an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority will proceed to prosecution.

Information regarding penalty notices can be found on Harrow Council's website [Education Penalty Notices – Harrow Council](#)

6. Strategies for promoting attendance and punctuality

The school regularly remind parents/carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their full entitlement to education.

We raise awareness and promote good attendance in a number of different ways:

- The weekly bulletin
- Letters to parents
- Individual meetings with parents
- The school's website
- Information leaflets
- Parent consultation meetings

The school will use opportunities to teach children the importance of high attendance and good punctuality at school. For example, through assemblies and PSHE lessons.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

Pupils' attendance is monitored on a regular basis by the attendance officers in partnership with the headteacher and designated senior leader responsible for attendance. In addition, the attendance of pupils who have been absent from school due to illness or medical appointments.

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular 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 school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

The Governing Board will monitor the implementation of this policy.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 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 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

Harrow's Attendance Intervention Model – to be used for irregular attendance and unauthorised absences.

Phase	School actions	LA Attendance Team Services	LA Children's Services
Phase 1	First day response – log of texts/calls 1st school warning letter – • after either less than 5 days unauthorised sessions • attendance drops below 90% • Persistently late after 8:50am • Persistently late after the register closes (9:20am) School to set monitoring period to review attendance/punctuality. If no improvement during monitoring period – Second school warning letter to be issued, this may involve the scheduling of a meeting to discuss absence/lateness. EPN to be issued when - • threshold for unauthorised absence is met - after 10 unauthorised sessions (5 school days) or • failure to improve persistent absence (below 90%) during the monitoring period or • In cases where a child persistently arrives at school after the register has closed (9:20am) and has received at least eight (8) unauthorised late marks within one term. • Failure to improve persistent lateness after 8:50am during the monitoring period.	Issue EPN if required	
Phase 2	Meeting / School Attendance panel with parents - Complete MASH Referral with parental agreement for Early Support or refer to other services - School and parents to sign attendance contract - School to inform parents about possible referral to LA pre-court panel and specify monitoring period		MASH Team receive MASH referral and consider for Early Support, worker allocated
Phase 3	If no progress has happened and further unauthorised absences have occurred, school to send Pre-Court Panel referral form to LA with chronology. School to attend pre-court panel meeting with LA.	Review chronology, arrange pre-court panel if appropriate.	
Phase 4		If no progress or engagement at Pre-Court Panel after monitoring period, LA to pursue court action.	

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed if guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every three years by the Headteacher and Designated Lead for Attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Attendance and Punctuality for Pupils in Alternative Provision

Where a pupil is placed in alternative provision, West Lodge remains responsible for monitoring their attendance, welfare, and overall progress. Attendance expectations apply equally to all pupils, whether they are based on the main school site or attending an external provision.

The school will work in close partnership with the alternative provider to:

- Ensure daily registration and punctuality records are accurately maintained and shared with the school in a timely manner.
- Follow up any unexplained absences or lateness immediately, in line with safeguarding procedures.
- Review attendance patterns through regular meetings between the school, provider, parents/carers, and where appropriate, the pupil.
- Ensure that the quality of provision and pastoral support enables pupils to remain engaged in learning and make good progress towards reintegration or transition plans.

Where attendance concerns arise, the school will work collaboratively with families and the provider to identify barriers, offer early help, and, where necessary, involve the local authority in accordance with statutory guidance.

Dual Registration

Some pupils who attend alternative provision part-time will be dual registered, remaining on roll at West Lodge while also registered with the external provider. In such cases, West Lodge retains overall responsibility for the pupil's attendance, safeguarding, and educational outcomes.

Attendance will be recorded in line with DfE guidance:

- The main school records the pupil using the appropriate dual registration attendance code ("D"), and
- The alternative provider records attendance and shares this information daily with West Lodge.

Regular communication between the school, provider, and family ensures that attendance, punctuality, and engagement remain consistent across both settings. Any absence from either provision is followed up promptly to ensure the pupil's safety and wellbeing.

Local Authority–Arranged or Off-Site Provision

For pupils educated off-site through Local Authority–arranged provision (such as medical tuition, hospital education, or longer-term placements), West Lodge continues to hold oversight of the pupil's attendance, welfare, and progress.

The Local Authority or provider will maintain daily attendance records and share them with the school's Attendance Officer and Designated Safeguarding Lead. Regular review meetings ensure that pupils remain engaged in learning and are supported to reintegrate into school, or to transition successfully to their next stage of education. All attendance information from off-site provision is incorporated into whole-school monitoring to ensure that every pupil remains known, safe, and supported, wherever they are learning.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Absence request form

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day