

West Haddon Endowed School

Policy Document

ATTENDANCE Policy

‘Where Happiness Promotes Success’

OUR SCHOOL VISION

To ensure every child in our school has an outstanding education and develops the values and character to live life in its fullness contributing to society.

Jesus said: I have come in order that you might have life-and life in all its fullness. John 10:10

Our School Aims

1. To equip all children with attitudes, skills and knowledge to enable them to enjoy their childhood and serve as a foundation for further development
2. To place Christian values at the heart of everything we do
3. To provide a happy environment that is caring, nurturing and supportive for everyone involved in our school
4. To treat the children as individuals and encourage them to reach their potential
5. To maintain and strengthen our links with the wider community

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Approved by:	Peter Stephens	Last reviewed:	September 2024
Page 1 of 15		Next review due:	September 2027

Introduction

West Haddon Endowed C. of E. Primary School seeks to ensure that all its children receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential; success for all. Attendance is important at school because:

- Education provides a means of advancement for all young people to improve their life chances.
- Regular school attendance is a legal requirement for those registered at a school. Without it the efforts of the best teachers and schools will come to nothing.
- Children need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.
- Irregular attendance undermines that educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. It places children at risk and in some cases it can result in children being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.

Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. At West Haddon Primary School we aim to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carer and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality.

1.Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos which values regular attendance. We will endeavour to:

- Regularly track attendance
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Build strong relationships with families to ensure children have the support in place to attend school
- Work in partnership with other agencies to ensure that children attend school regularly

2.Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- The [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

➤ [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to the DFE's guidance on School Census which explains persistent absence.

3.Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

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

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 children
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Informing parents of their child's attendance percentage
- Supporting parents with their child's attendance
- Reporting unauthorised absence to the LA who will decide if further action is needed

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer, currently our deputy headteacher, is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- 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
- Delivering targeted intervention and support, to children and families
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to complete the LA documentation for issuing fixed-penalty notices

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- recording attendance on a daily basis
- recording who is absent from class.
- Ensuring that the register is returned to the office throughout the school day.
- Reporting attendance concerns to the attendance officer or headteacher

School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Record the absence on the school system and track attendance half termly
- Call parents if a child on the first day of absence if the school has not been notified of the absence
- Report attendance concerns to the attendance officer or headteacher

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return
- 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

Children

Children are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording Attendance

We will keep an attendance register and place all children onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the morning session and the start of the afternoon session each day. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

We will also record:

- For children of compulsory school age 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.

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Children must arrive in school by 8:55am on each school day although the school doors open at 8.45am. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.05 am. The afternoon registration will take place at 1.00pm for Reception and Key Stage 1 and 1.30pm for Key Stage 2. Afternoon registers will be kept open for a period of 10 minutes. Children arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close.

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 9:00am, or as soon as possible by calling or emailing the school office staff on:

- Telephone: 01788 510318
- Email: office@westhaddon.northants.sch.uk

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 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.

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. Parents/carers will need to email into the school office, using the above email, 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 notify the school office of other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Section 5 itemises which term-time absences the school can authorise.

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.

Parents/carers will be contacted in writing, by the Headteacher, if lateness becomes a persistent problem. If lateness does not improve, parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss the matter further.

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. Responses will be logged.
- Use the correct attendance code as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained
- Leave an answer phone/voicemail/email message should the parents/carers not be contactable.
- Contact any of the pupil's emergency contacts if the school cannot reach the parent/carer.

- 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 School Attendance Support Officer.
- If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts on the first day of absence, the school will conduct a home visit.
- If a home visit cannot be made or a home visit does not result in the safety and whereabouts of a child being known, the school will escalate the concern by contacting MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Team).
- 'Children Missing from Education' procedures outlined on the West Northants Council website will be applied. <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/attendance-and-behaviour-support-schools/tracking-children-and-their-families-who-have-gone-missing>

Reporting to Parents/Carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels during parents evening and end of year reports.

5.Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Approval for Term-time Absence

The Department for Education guidelines, which the Headteacher must follow, are quite precise. The Headteacher is not able, by Law, to grant time away from school except in exceptional circumstances. In such exceptional instances, the Headteacher may authorise an absence after receiving a written request outlining the reasons for the need for a child's absence during term time. We ask that you make a written request, using the leave of absence request form, well in advance of any proposed special occasion to ascertain whether the school would view the reason for absence as valid or not. A note from home does not automatically mean an absence is authorised. Parents/carers will be informed of the outcome in writing (Appendix 6). Absences without the Headteacher's permission, in advance, are classed as truancy and must be recorded on the child's school record as 'unauthorised absence'. The following list gives examples of situations whereby a request for absence may be considered authorised:

- Illness
- Specialist medical or dental appointments
- Family bereavement
- Close family wedding
- Examinations off site, for example music and dance examinations
- Attendance at an event at the request of a public organisation
- Visit to a new school
- Religious observance

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 and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, using the Request for Absence Form (Appendix 2). The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Unauthorised Absence

It is a parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that their child attends school. Absence from school will not be authorised for the following:

- Family holidays and trips no matter what length
- Birthdays
- Caring for brothers/sisters/relatives or because suitable child-care arrangements cannot be made
- Awaiting for a repair service visit or delivery
- Shopping
- Leaving early to travel to an event

Staff are not obliged to provide work for children when parents/carers have chosen to take their children out of school during term time.

Legal Sanctions

If you take your child out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) over a period of ten weeks, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the local authority for consideration of legal action. This could include:

- A Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine.
- Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.
- Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment

The local authority can take action against parents/carers for irregular attendance of their child, where the child is of compulsory school age (the start of the school term following their fifth birthday). An initial fixed penalty notice of £80 is issued to each parent/carer for each child. So, a two parent/carer family with two children would be fined £320. For more information see <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/attendance-support/penalty-notices-school-non-attendance>

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police. 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 can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6.Strategies for promoting attendance

As a school we promote good attendance by the following strategies:

- Rewarding excellent attendance
- Sharing attendance data in the school's newsletter
- Sharing resources for parents to provide support via the school newsletter
- Promoting the importance of good attendance within lessons and assemblies

- Contacting parents and carers to address and provide support for attendance issues

9. Attendance Monitoring

Attendance will be reviewed by the Attendance Officer at the end of every half term. This will then be fed back to governors at every full governing body meeting. Disadvantaged and SEND pupils attendance will also be monitored at the end of every half term and compared to that of non-disadvantaged and non-SEND.

Monitoring Attendance

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 body.

Analysing Attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or groups 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.

Reducing Persistent Absence 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. Our school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who School Attendance Support Officer 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.

Any child's attendance that falls below 90%, authorised or unauthorised, or any child not at school for ten sessions or five days within a six-week period, is classed by the Government as having 'Persistent Absence'. Absence at this level impacts progress both academically and socially and will trigger our 'Three Stage Process'. This process enables us to support families in minimising this impact and ensure that school attendance is valued. Persistently absent pupils will be tracked and monitored carefully, and where there is no improvement in attendance, outside agencies will be involved as required.

Stage 1 – Where any child's attendance falls below 90%, or any child is not at school for ten sessions or five days within a ten-week period, a Stage 1 letter will be sent home (see Appendix 3).

Stage 2 – If, during the following half term, attendance has not increased or a child has again been absent for ten sessions or five days within a ten-week period, a Stage 2 letter will be sent home. This letter will set a target of 96% attendance for the subsequent half term. (Appendix 4). Note – where the target of 96% is met or exceeded, a positive acknowledgement letter will be sent home.

Stage 3 – If during the half term following the Stage 2 letter, attendance has not increased to the target set, or a child has again been absent for ten sessions or five days within a ten-week period, a Stage 3 letter will be sent home – which will include a date for the parents/carers to attend a meeting with school to discuss the attendance and will also trigger a referral to the School Attendance Support Officer (Appendix 5).

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and at least every 3 years by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

9. Links With Other Policies

This policy links to our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and Behaviour policy

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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2:

Request for Absence Form

Where parents decide to have their child registered at state school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

If you take your child out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (90%) over a period of ten weeks, our school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the local authority for consideration of legal action.

This could include:

- A Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine
- Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.
- Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment

To make a request for absence in term time you must have **Parental Responsibility and be the parent with whom the child normally lives**. If you do not have Parental Responsibility and do not normally live with the child, you must seek the consent from the legal guardian who does and that person should complete this form. Absences will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, which are outlined in our Attendance Policy, and which is in line with the statutory guidance from the DFE.

When deciding whether to allow term time leave, for any reason, our school will consider:

- The reason for the leave
- The time and duration of the leave
- Whether or not the leave could have been taken during the statutory school holiday periods
- Your child's record of attendance and the learning that will be missed.

Please do not be offended if asked to provide evidence for certain types of absence request – this is so we comply with local and statutory guidelines.

To Be completed by Parent			
Name or child/ren			
Class/es			
Leave of absence start date		Leave of absence end date	
Reason for absence request. Please include any exceptional circumstances.			
Parental Signature			
Print Name		Date of Submission	
To Be Completed by School			
Number of Sessions Absent for this request		Current % Attendance for academic year	
Number of Sessions absent in the past 10 weeks		Number of unauthorised sessions to date for the academic year.	
Decision (authorised/unauthorised)		Signed by	

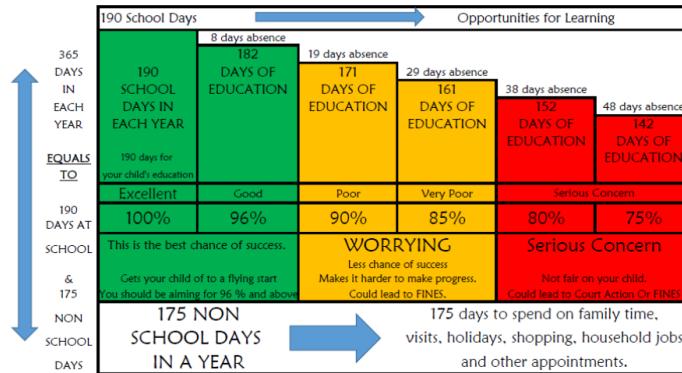
Appendix 3:

Date

Dear,

I am writing to you with regard to your child's attendance. It has been noted that percentage attendance has fallen to . As your child's attendance has dropped below 90%, this is classed as persistent absence. We enclose a copy of your child's attendance certificate for your information.

We believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment. You may already be aware that when a child's attendance drops below 90%, research shows that their academic achievement can be significantly hindered. Please see the chart below which is based on Government research.



Please help us to help you. If you are worried about your child's school attendance, then staff are available at school and within the local authority who can help and support you.
Gaps in education can mean your child will not reach their full potential.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different, and we aim to work in partnership with parents to provide the best education for every child.

We will be monitoring your child's attendance for the next half term and expect to see an improvement.

If you would like to discuss this further or feel you would benefit from seeing the class teacher or myself please feel free to book an appointment.

Yours sincerely

David Rosevear
Headteacher

Appendix 4:

Date

Dear,

Further to my letter dated regarding’s attendance which had fallen to%, I am writing to inform you that their attendance is currently at%. While this shows some improvement/no improvement/, it is still below the 90% attendance which is still classed as persistent absence.

As previously explained, regular attendance is crucial for your child's academic progress. Missing school can result in gaps in learning, which may affect their learning. Additionally, consistent attendance allows for the development of important social skills and friendships with peers.

We would like to work together with you to support in achieving an attendance rate of at least 96% in order to maximise your child's learning and would like to invite you to a meeting to discuss how we can work together to improve attendance and ensure their success at our school.

The school office staff will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time. I enclose our school attendance policy and child's record attendance for your information.

I look forward to meeting with you soon.

Yours sincerely

David Rosevear
Headteacher

Appendix 5:

Date

Dear

I am writing to you again to address a matter of concern regarding’s attendance and we note that the target of 96% has not been met. Currently, their attendance rate is at percent, which continues to be below the expected level and is/is not classed as persistent absence.

As we discussed at our previous meeting, regular attendance is crucial for a child's academic progress, as well as for their social and emotional development. Missing school can have a negative impact on’s ability to keep up with lessons, form friendships with peers, and develop important social skills. I understand that has no specific needs/ has needs that may be affecting their attendance, and we want to work together with you to provide support to improve their rate of attendance.

We have already met with you to discuss this issue, but unfortunately, we have not seen the required improvement. Please note that our attendance policy states that a referral to the local authority School Attendance Support Officer is now made. Please let us know if there are any challenges or concerns that may be affecting your child’s attendance that I have not already been aware of, so that we can include this within the referral.

Your cooperation and support are vital in helping achieve their full potential.

Yours sincerely

David Rosevear
Headteacher