Westbourne Primary School

Attendance Policy

Reviewed: September 2025

Next Review: September 2026

1.0 Westbourne Primary School's Expectations:

We believe our pupils will only achieve their full potential if they attend school regularly and punctually. At Westbourne, we expect all pupils to aim for 100% attendance and punctuality. Individual pupil records prove that this is achievable.

2.0 Promoting Attendance:

Good attendance contributes to:

- Personal and social development
- Continuity of learning
- Reputation for reliability
- Fulfilment of National Curriculum requirements
- Success in school

Westbourne promotes good attendance to the whole school community through weekly newsletters to parents, weekly and monthly celebration of class attendance in assemblies, and displays around school. The importance of good attendance is also highlighted to parents when children join the school (e.g. new Nursery/Reception parents meetings).

3.0 School's Responsibilities:

- To record each pupil's attendance and punctuality;
- To provide attendance and punctuality percentages for:
  - *Annual Reports to Parents*
  - *Department For Education (DFE) Census Returns*
  - *Court Reports*
  - *Daily DfE and Local Authority attendance data*
- To monitor school attendance and punctuality of all pupils;
- To share concerns with parents regarding attendance and punctuality;
- To report any further concerns to children's social care;
- To share information with the Local Authority's Education Welfare Officer (EWO);
- To decide whether to authorise a pupil's absence.

4.0 Legal Requirements:

Parents and Guardians are responsible by law for ensuring that all children of compulsory school age (5-16) receive full time education.

If a child does not attend regularly at the school at which he/she is registered, the school is empowered to take legal action against parents.

5.0 Children Missing Education and Prolonged Absences:

Missing school can be an indicator that a child's welfare is at risk. Section 175 of Keeping Children Safe In Education 2024 says that "Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines." To safeguard pupils who are missing education due to prolonged or repeated periods of absence Westbourne Primary School will ensure compliance with local authority policy and procedures for Children Missing Education (Children Missing Education 2016, Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2022 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024).

- If the absence exceeds **5 consecutive days** and no reason has been provided for the absence, and school have been unable to reach the family through various methods (including a visit to the home address), the school will write to the last known address;

- If the absence exceeds **10 consecutive days** and no reason has been provided for the absence, or no permission obtained, the school will inform the Local Authority in line with Section 17 (*Children Missing in Education 2016)*;
- Where a child has not returned to school for **10 days** after an authorised absence or any child who has been missing for more **than 20 days,** the child will be added to the Authorities Children Missing Education Panel by the Education Welfare Officer, or the school where no referral has been made.
- The pupil can be removed from the admission register when school and local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquires, to establish the whereabouts of the child.
- The Children Missing Education: statutory guidance for Local Authorities (August 2024), and the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance, place a statutory duty on schools to:
- Collect information during the admissions procedure and again when the child is leaving the school;
- Inform the local authority when a child's name is going to be removed from the admission register for any of the grounds set-out in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (2006);
- Arrange full-time education for students who are excluded, from the sixth day of fixed-term exclusion.
- Consider and respond to prolonged or repeat occasions of absence and lateness as a possible warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. Recognising problems when they first emerge and also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need (CIN) or who has a child protection plan (CP), or is a looked after child) (LAC), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

6.0 Parental Responsibilities:

- To support your son/daughter in aiming for an attendance record of 100%;
- To monitor your son/daughter's attendance record;
- To avoid booking family holidays during term time or appointments during school day;
- To ensure your son/daughter arrives punctually at school.
- To report any absences on the first morning, stating the duration of the absence using the school's reporting systems (see **7.0** Reporting Absences).

7.0 Registration:

Morning Session

The school gates open at **8:40am** and close promptly at **8:45am**. Children who arrive after this time will have to enter school through the office at the main gate. Children that arrive from **8:48am** will receive a late mark in the school register. The school register closes at **9.20am**, children that arrive from this time will be recorded as 'late after registration closes'.

Afternoon Session:

Infants Registration: 12:55pm
Juniors Registration: 1:45pm

End of the Day:

Reception: 3:05pm
Year 1 and Year 2: 3:10pm
Year 3 – Year 6: 3:15pm

8.0 Punctuality/Lateness:

It is of paramount importance that all children arrive on time for school each day for them to make the best possible progress in terms of learning and all-round development. Pupils who arrive late miss the teacher's instruction to the class on the morning's work, miss messages or information relating to the whole class, and have less time to complete their work.

The school's Attendance Leads and Senior Leadership Team actively monitor punctuality. Communication with parents will be triggered if:

- A child has been late 4 or more times by October parent/teacher consultations. This will then be reviewed in December, with further communication to parents if there is no improvement.
- A child has been late 8 or more times by March parent/teacher consultations. This will then be reviewed in May, with further communication to parents if there is no improvement.

The school will communicate punctuality/lateness concerns through one or more of the following:

- Phone call home to parents/guardians from Attendance Leads/Senior Leadership Team.
- Discussions with teachers (for example, at parents' consultation meetings).
- Letter to parents/carers explaining punctuality concerns.

If children are persistently late, parents or guardians may be required to meet with school to discuss the matter. The school will pass on punctuality concerns to the Local Authority, including the school's Education Welfare Officer, who the school works closely with to monitor all pupils' attendance and punctuality.

End of Year Report:

End of year reports are sent home at the end of the Summer Term (July). The report includes the table below with the relevant column highlighted for each child.

Attendance and Punctuality – Parental Responsibility

	Excellent	Good	Room for Improvement	Cause for Concern
Attendance	Attendance is 99% or higher.	Attendance is 96% or higher.	Attendance falls below 96%.	Attendance is below 90%.
Punctuality	Always in school on time.	5 lates or fewer in the year.	9 lates or fewer in the year.	10 or more lates in the year.

9.0 Reporting Absences:

Parents and guardians must inform the school on the first morning by 9:30am of any absence (and every morning thereafter if still unable to come to school, unless agreed with the school, e.g., 48 hours after sickness/diarrhoea), stating the reason for the absence by using one of the following methods:

- Telephoning the school on 0208 644 8453 (leaving a message on the absence line)
- Sending a message via parent mail (this can be done on the parent-mail app under the absences tab)
- Emailing the school at office@westbourne.sutton.sch.uk

If we have not received a message to explain your child's absence, we will endeavour to contact everyone on your child's contact list. It is essential that you keep this list up-to-date with at least two correct contact numbers . If we are still unable to make contact with an appropriate adult after 2 days, a member of school staff may visit the child's home address to ensure the child's wellbeing.

10.0 Sending Pupils Home:

The decision to send a child home due to illness or accident will be taken in agreement with the Class Teacher. Any child who is sent home will be recorded in the absence book in the main office. This is monitored by the Headteacher regularly.

Children from Year 5 & Year 6 only will be allowed to walk home alone if written permission has been granted from parents and the school has no concerns (child is unwell, or distance, etc.). It is advised that children of primary age walking home alone go straight to an agreed residence and do not go home to an unsupervised dwelling.

11.0 School Collection:

Parents or a person designated by the parent will be asked to collect the child at the end of the school day. It is the school's policy that siblings or family members under the **age of 14 or of a responsible age and ability** will not be allowed to take a child home, unless in exceptional circumstances and with consent of the child's parent(s)/ guardian (s) and **where the school has no concerns**.

12.0 Authorising Absence:

Only the school can authorise an absence.

Guidelines from the DfE are specific and allow the school to authorise the following:

- Pupil illness;
- Pupil absence through 'leave' given by the school (this commonly includes medical appointments, interview, other exceptional circumstances);
- Religious observance where applicable.

Examples of absences that we are not able to authorise include:

- Holidays during term-time;
- Trips abroad/ away during term-time
- Shopping trips;
- 'Looking after' e.g. brother/sister, pet, elderly relative, etc.
- Arrival after closure of register with no valid reason for late arrival;
- Truancy;
- Day trips;
- Birthdays;
- Due to parents/carers or sibling ill-health.

Authorised absences are recorded on pupils' annual school reports and form part of the information transferred to High School. Unauthorised absences are also included in the school's report to the DfE.

If you need to take your child out of school for a specific reason, you must notify the Headteacher in writing stating the reasons for and dates of absence. The Headteacher will then decide whether the absence will be authorised or unauthorised. **Failure to notify the Headteacher in writing could lead to the school not knowing where your child/ren are, and subsequently triggering safeguarding measures and referral to external agencies.**

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered by schools, in collaboration with the Local Authority through the Attendance Support Team, when the threshold of 10 sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence (together or separate occasions) is met within 10-school-week period – this means it can span weeks, school terms and academic years. Detailed information for parents is available in the Appendix.

13.0 Attendance Data:

The school collect and analyse attendance data and use this information to work with children and families that are struggling with attendance, and motivate and incentivise excellent attendance of pupils and cohorts.

This information is also shared with the London Borough of Sutton for monitoring purposes to provide further support for those families who are struggling with attendance.

Classes with the highest attendance and punctuality record are rewarded monthly, termly (Infants and Juniors) and yearly with a trophy to keep in their classroom.

14.0 Low attendance leads to:

- Weak preparation for adult life and the work environment;
- Difficulty in meeting National Curriculum requirements;
- Gaps in Education.

Once your child's attendance has dropped below 96%, you will be contacted via letter to inform you of your child's attendance. Should their attendance continue to drop, the school has a duty to report their absences to the local authority. You will be given the opportunity to meet with the Attendance Lead to discuss any reasons for lack of attendance or to discuss any ways in which the school can support you to improve it.

An attendance of below 90% is a cause for concern and will be reported to the Local Authority in a termly report. Children whose attendance is 90% or below are classed as Persistent Absentees (PA). An attendance of 90% means that the equivalent of one day every fortnight is being missed due to absence. At this point, you may be asked to provide medical evidence for any appointments during school hours, which can include:

- A text message/email confirmation from your GP/Doctor.
- A photo of the confirmation signing-in at the Doctor's.
- Photo of prescription.

You will be contacted in writing by the Headteacher or Attendance lead. Attendance below 90% may also become a safeguarding concern unless there are extenuating circumstances.

An attendance of 80% means that more than a full year's education would be lost over your child's primary school career.

15.0 Help and Support:

We recognise that there can be a range of factors that can impact negatively on your family's ability to maintain good attendance. If you are struggling with any situation, it is important that you make school aware, so that we can work alongside the child/ren and your family. We may be able to signpost you to support services within the community or bring in external agencies to work together to assist your child in accessing school.

16.0 Referrals to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO):

The school attendance lead inspects the registers on a regular basis. When concerns arise regarding a child's ongoing poor attendance and/or punctuality, a referral form to the boroughs School Attendance Service can be made. Sutton School Attendance Service will follow up the referral as appropriate. This may be by carrying out a home visit, contacting the parents in writing and/or arranging to meet at School. They may also become involved in a Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting convened to ascertain support needed for the family in order for the child's attendance to improve. Attendance that is below expected levels may lead to parents/ carers receiving Penalty Notice warnings/fines.

The London Borough of Sutton take an active role in monitoring attendance in all Sutton schools and will work with schools when attendance is causing concern.

17.0 Contacts:

If you have any queries with regard to your child's attendance, or feel you need support in improving their attendance record, please contact the Headteacher or Attendance Lead.

Headteacher
Mr D. Miracapillo

Attendance Leads
Mr Paul Goldhawk (Deputy Headteacher)
Mrs Claire Mills (Family Support Worker/Designated Safeguarding Lead)
Tel: 020 8644 8453

Appendix

Attendance Service

Cantium House, Railway Approach,
SM6 0DZ

National Framework for Penalty Notices – What you need to know.

The following changes will apply from 19th August 2024:

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered by schools when the threshold of 10 sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence (together or separate occasions) is met within 10 school week period – this means it can span weeks, school terms and academic years.

NB – If in an individual case the local authority (or other authorised officer) believes a penalty notice would be appropriate if a non-attendance trend is identified, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met.

First Offences:
The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at **£160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.**

Second Offences (within 3 years):
A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a **flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.**

Any Further Offence (within 3 years):
A Third Penalty Notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. If the threshold is met for a third or subsequent times within 3 years, alternative legal intervention will be taken, this may include cases being presented straight to a Magistrates' Court.

For London Borough of Sutton's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct (updated version regarding new framework to come) or further support with any attendance issues, please visit our website:
https://www.cognus.org.uk/services/attendance-support-team/for-families/