

	Attendance Policy	
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	Evaluated by Governors	October 2015
	Governor Lead	Fiona Clifton
	Governor Committee	Children & Learning
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	Review Responsibility	Abigail Slade
	Links to other policies	Behaviour Policy
	Status and Review	Statutory / Annual

West Hill Attendance target - 100% - The expectation of this school is that all pupils attend 100% unless there is a genuine reason for the absence, approved by the Head teacher

The staff of West Hill School are committed, in partnership with the parents, pupils, governors and the Local Education Authority, to building a school which serves the community commendably, and of which the community is proud.

The school staff, firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. We also refer to the guidance on attendance set out at <https://www.gov.uk/schools-colleges/behaviour-attendance> - 'Behaviour and attendance' section and the Home/School agreement which is signed annually.

Expectations

Attendance %	Level of concern	Action by the School
96% and above	None - on track attendance	None
90% to 96%	Concern as below school target	Letter sent to parents
Below 90%	Persistence Absence	Referral to Education Welfare Service and/or medical evidence required for all absences

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly;
- attend school punctually;
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day; and
- discuss promptly with their form tutor/class teacher any problems that discourage them from attending school.

We expect that all parents/carers/persons who have day-to-day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that any child in their care arrives at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child is unable to attend school;
- contact the school each day their child is absent **and** send a note on their return to school; and
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

We would encourage discussion where there are any issues arising that the school could support in school to avoid absenteeism e.g. management of an on-going health issue. We can be flexible on daily arrangements to facilitate this.

We expect that school staff will:

Attendance Task	Member of Staff Responsible
keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily - (pupils arriving late due to transport issues will not be penalised)	School Administrator
monitor every pupil's attendance and by publishing attendance statistics	School Administrator
contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence	School Administrator
follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes authorising the absence	School Administrator
encourage good attendance by celebrating and rewarding good and improved attendance using the Reward Scheme to encourage.	Form Tutors
provide a welcoming atmosphere for children; provide a safe learning environment; and provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns	ALL staff
respond promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils	School Administrator
inform parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arrange meetings with them if necessary and refer the family to the Education Welfare Service if the irregular attendance continues	School Administrator

Holidays

It is West Hill's policy not to authorise holiday in term time. However in exceptional circumstances (this means being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, which outweighs the loss of teaching time) the school may consider a request, providing the child has an attendance level of 96% or above, but the normality will be that requests will be refused. We will not authorise any absence for pupils in Key Stage 4.

Responding To Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9.30 a.m. the school will endeavour to contact them that day. If the family is not reachable by telephone a text will be sent.
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer. If by the end of the second day there has still been no contact the school will send a letter of concern to parents/carers to invite them into school to discuss their concerns. This may be discussed with the school's Family Support Worker. The school will tell parents that if the absence persists a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service (EWS).
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the EWS may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution.
- While it is understood that a child may have specific medical needs, school reserves the right to seek evidence to support such absences. The school will always ask for medical evidence where a child's attendance falls below 90%.
- It is appreciated that there can be difficulties obtaining appointments with specialists, such as orthodontists, but we do request that you endeavour to arrange these for out-of-school hours.

Changing schools

It is important that if families decide to send a child in their care to a different school they inform West Hill School staff and their Case Officer as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until all are satisfied that the child is accepted on to the roll of an alternative, appropriate school.

School Organisation

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

In addition to this, the School has the following responsibilities:

Head teacher, governors and designated member of school staff with overall responsibility for attendance to:

- adopt the whole policy;
- ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that appropriate resources are provided;
- initiate a scheme for contacting parents on the first day of absence;
- ensure that key staff have time-tabled periods for liaison and follow-up work with the EWS and appropriate access to attendance data;
- consult and liaise closely with the EWS on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified and referred without delay;
- work in close collaboration with the EWS during the half termly register analysis;
- institute an attendance award scheme with assemblies, certificates and rewards; and
- monitor and evaluate attendance with the EWS.

Class teachers/form tutors to:

- complete registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily;
- follow up any unexplained non-attendance; inform the school office of all reasons for absences so they can be recorded in the School Information Management System (SIMS);
- inform the designated person in charge of overall attendance of concerns; be alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in non-attendance and report these concerns as soon as possible to the Senior Leadership Team.

Penalty Notices

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

- Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who-have incurred unauthorised absences.
- **The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 states that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.**
- Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Headteacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the

leave of absence is taken.