



North Westminster Federation

Working Together to Grow Our Future

Attendance Policy

Contents

The Legal Framework.....	2
Aims	2
Roles and Responsibilities.....	3
Reducing persistent and severe absence.....	6
Authorised and unauthorised absence.....	8
Sanctions.....	9
Strategies for promoting and rewarding excellent attendance	10
Medical Appointments during the School Day	12
Religious Leave.....	12
Attendance monitoring.....	12
The people responsible for attendance	13

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Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fully achieve in all areas, is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves pupils vulnerable to falling behind. Pupils with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The North Westminster Federation (NWF) expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved.

At the NWF, we are continuously working towards our goal of 100% attendance for all pupils.

The Legal Framework

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:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Aims

- ensure that every pupil is safeguarded and their right to education is protected;
- ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality;
- raise standards and ensure every pupil makes good progress, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality;
- ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication about the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance;
- identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individual pupils, classes and groups of pupils and address them;
- Work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Board

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole Federation and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the Federation's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
- The Federation's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the Executive Headteacher/Head of Schools to account for the implementation of this policy

Executive Headteacher/Head of School

The Executive Headteacher/Head of School (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.

The Executive Headteacher/Head of School is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the federation/school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

Welfare Officer (WO)

- takes responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with and responding to parental enquires;
- oversees the analysis of data and respond to findings;
- Liaise with the Administrative Officer (AO) to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality;
- produces data for Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to analyse and maintain communication regarding attendance and punctuality within their phases;
- liaises with external agencies such as Early Help and make referrals where necessary;
- Ensures that action plans are implemented where there is a cause for concern regarding attendance;
- works with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence;
- revises and amends this policy, as required;
- contacts parents in the event that no information has been received for a child's absence;
- advise parents on Federation procedures and attendance policy where necessary;
- monitors reasons for absence and updates class registers.

Administrative Officer (AO)

- carries out and record the outcome of first day text messages, when a pupil doesn't arrive at school when no reason has been received;
- monitors weekly attendance and punctuality data for year groups and classes;
- checks the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence;
- informs the WO promptly, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality;
- records reasons for absence and updating class registers;

- implements the daily checking of electronic registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions;
- maintains SIMS attendance records in line with this policy;
- liaises with the WO when necessary;
- maintain clear communication with the SLT regarding attendance and punctuality within their phases;
- supports the WO with the promotion good attendance and punctuality, through finding/organising incentives;
- ensures staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy;
- Informs parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school.

Teachers

- ensure quality first teaching every day, with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs;
- keep accurate and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance through the electronic register system;
- take a formal register of all pupils twice a day. This is done on the school's SIMs system at 8.55am and 1.00pm/1.15pm / 1.30pm;
- regularly remind pupils and parents about the importance of good attendance;
- provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from pupils;
- establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting all pupil's needs;
- work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, pupil protection;
- work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these;
- inform the WO, of pupils who persist with poor attendance or punctuality;
- feedback to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality.

Parents

A child should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. If a child has a minor illness parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better at school, the school will contact parents straight away, to collect them. If your child is absent from school for **more than three consecutive days** you will be asked to provide medical evidence (such as medical appointment card, prescription, text appointment or similar) to cover these absences in order for the school to authorise those absences.

If a child has a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know. A child should be brought back to school after appointments and should miss as little time as possible.

If a child is absent before and/or after school holidays, parents will be asked to provide evidence to cover the absences. In the event no evidence is provided, the leave may not be authorised and could potentially lead to a penalty notice being issued by the local authority.

Parents are expected to

- ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day no later than 8.55am;
- promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their child attends school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons;
- wherever possible arrange medical and dental appointments out of school time;
- telephone the school on the first day of absence for their child*;
- for every day thereafter, that their child is absent from school to telephone/email/text the school*;
- provide an explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school;
- work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the pupil's life, which may impact on their learning;
- ensure the school has up-to-date contact details for nominated contacts of the child.

****In the event that a parent does not contact the school to report absence, and a child continues to be absent, this may mean a child is missing in education. In such cases, the school will undertake welfare checks. This can include an unannounced home visit or even referral on to other children services for support.***

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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the Federation's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence

- Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary

Thresholds for monitoring attendance

	Attendance %	Action	Monitoring period	Expectations
Stage 1	Under 94%	Initial phone call and or letter/email	6 weeks	● Improvement shown - no further action taken ● No improvement or continues to decrease - progress to stage 2
Stage2	Under 91%	Meeting with WO – action plan (AP) implemented	6 weeks	● Improvement shown - review AP, continue to monitor for a further 3 weeks ● No improvement – progress to stage 3
Stage 3	No further improvements	Meeting with WO and Exec HT, Head of School or Assistant HT in their absence	3 weeks	● Meet for review, if improvements shown revert back to stage 2 and set new targets ● No improvement- progress to stage 4
Stage 4	Under 85%	Referral to Early Help (EH)		● Engagement/referral with EH to help improve attendance

The Local Authority, through the Early Help, is expected to

- support the school in improving attendance, through whole school initiatives and individual pupil interventions;
- work with families and other agencies to remove barriers to good attendance;
- ensure that parents are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance;
- uphold and enforce the law in respect of attendance, pupil employment, involvement in entertainment and pupil protection.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Executive Headteacher/Head of School will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Executive Headteacher/Head of School will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 School attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Executive Headteacher's/Head of School's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

In the event of an exceptional circumstance, leave of absence will only be granted for two days.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, **a leave of absence will not be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.**

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least three weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the leave of absence request form. The school may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Sanctions

Our Federation will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The Executive Headteacher/Head of School (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Strategies for promoting and rewarding excellent attendance

To ensure good attendance and punctuality is regularly promoted and remains high profile across school.

To achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality by rewarding good attendance and punctuality through:

1. Weekly Celebration Assemblies - Classes with the highest attendance and punctuality receive Attendance awards and praise.
2. Monthly School Newsletter - Each month, the school newsletter is used to highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality and publishes the best classes for these.
3. Breakfast Club - to support parents by opening the school at 8.00am and offering children a breakfast and structured play time, ensuring they are on time for school.
4. Staff promoting good attendance - it is important that teachers are regularly promoting good attendance with their classes. Good class attendance is celebrated weekly.
5. End of Term Attendance Rewards - At the end of each term there is a special reward for pupils who have achieved attendance at 100%. The WO and Head of School organise and lead on the end of term attendance celebrations and share attendance data. Pupils are informed on a weekly basis of attendance/punctuality achievements. This develops healthy competition between year groups to improve attendance. It also engages the teacher in conversation with their classes about attendance.
6. Parent/teacher consultation evenings – this provides an opportunity for teachers to praise and recognise excellent attendance or share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance. Where necessary a target for improving attendance is set.
7. Monitoring and Recording Attendance & Punctuality - Class registers are recorded electronically. The system ensures that no pupil is missed and that pupil information can be shared quickly and securely. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed

accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session.

All class registers are taken at 8.55am, this is the point the teacher must submit their final register.

From 9.00am the school playground gates are closed and parents need to bring their pupils to the front desk.

The WO meet pupils arriving late in the main office reception area. Parents are asked to wait with their children until their child's class comes out of assembly. (Nursery and Reception pupils are escorted to their classes). The pupils' names and classes are recorded to ensure that no pupils are missed on the register due to arriving in school late. The WO remains in the main entrance dealing with late arrivals until 9:05am, at which point the receptionist takes over.

Pupils arriving after 9:15am are recorded as 'U' (late after register closed) in the register. The AO then checks that the pupils who have arrived late have been marked present in the registers and corrects any mistakes or inputs codes for pupils who are known to be absent. The administrator then begins first day absence calls. Afternoon registers must be submitted by nominated staff straight after lunch play and before afternoon lessons commence. They should be concluded by 1:30pm.

8. The school sends out letters/emails to communicate with parents about poor attendance and punctuality. If attendance or punctuality does not improve following a letter, parents are invited in to school, to discuss the concerns with the WO and Head of School and plan for a way forward. If attendance or lateness does not improve following the meeting, then the family will be referred to the local authority / children's services who will offer support to parents. This service will make any subsequent decisions failing an improvement in a child's school attendance.

IMPORTANT: Child protection and safeguarding concerns must be acted on immediately, in line with the School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

9. Monitoring First Day Absence - If a pupil is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent or carer, a first day absence call will be made by the Administrative Officer (AO) who will:
 - establish a reason for every absence. No absence should be left on the system as an 'N' (no reason given) code;
 - phone parents' contact number(s);
 - repeat this during the first morning of absence if no response;
 - phone emergency contact number(s) to get an up-to-date contact number for the parent/carers and update the school system accordingly;
 - speak to the parents at home time, if they are at school to pick up other pupils;
 - speak to the parents face-to-face or by phone the next day and establish reasons for absence and update contact numbers. The parent or carer is asked to provide a reason as to why the pupil is not in school. The absence reason is recorded next to the pupil's name on the first day absence sheet and this is filed in the absence folder;
 - record absence as 'O' (unauthorised) if no reason is given for absence.

Medical Appointments during the School Day

In the case of a child attending a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, typically we would expect any such appointment to be made after school or as close to the end of the school day, as is possible. However, we also understand that sometimes you will have no control about the appointment times you are offered. Therefore, if a child has a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know well in advance.

Remember:

- Give the school as much advance notice as possible, you can email the school at attendance@hallfieldschool.org.uk or attendance@essendine.org.uk
- Please provide evidence of the appointment, this can be in the form of a letter, email or text reminder.
- If the appointment is made on the same day, please phone ahead to the school to let us know so that the class teacher can be notified.
- Please plan your journey, a short journey to a nearby clinic, dentist or hospital will only require a short travel time meaning children will miss as little time at school as possible.
- Ensure that as little time as possible is missed at school by bringing your child back straight after an appointment.

Please also be reminded that punctuality is regularly monitored. Should the school feel this is a concern; parents will be invited into school to discuss the concerns with and plan for a way forward.

Religious Leave

We acknowledge and welcome the multi-faith nature of our community and recognise that some families' important religious festivals may fall within term time.

The Local Authority has stated that 1 day's leave per term may be authorised for any individual occasion of Religious Observance.

Please note that no more than 1 day in any term will be authorised and no more than 3 days in any academic year will be authorised.

Attendance monitoring

Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families
- Provide regular attendance reports to, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

The people responsible for attendance matters in the North Westminster Federation are:

- Aaron Sumner, Executive Headteacher
- Claire Dunnet and Lisa Mafrica, Heads of Hallfield and Essendine Primary Schools and Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Nabila El-Ahmadi and Nairuz Breich, Welfare Officers for Hallfield and Essendine Primary School.
- Early Help, Westminster City Council.