



North Westminster Federation

Working Together to Grow Our Future

Attendance Policy

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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

It is a legal requirement for:

1. Parent(s) to secure an education for their pupils, whether at school or otherwise and to send them to school regularly once they are on the school's register.
2. The school to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school.
3. The Local Authority to provide education and to enforce attendance.

[School attendance guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

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

Executive Headteacher

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy, to deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with Bi-Borough policies and procedures and to consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Bi-Borough policies and procedures. The Executive Headteacher will also meet with the WO on a fortnightly basis to monitor and review the school's overall attendance.

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 school 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 9.00am 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.

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.

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.

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 Executive Headteacher 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 Executive Headteacher 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/carer 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.
10. The WO monitors individuals, classes, year groups, different ethnic groups, Special Education Needs and Free School Meals pupils. Patterns and trends in absence and punctuality, including persistent absence are noted. The systems and structures are then followed, to improve attendance for these individuals or groups. Pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern will receive a letter home and parents will be invited to work in partnership with the school.

Term Time Holidays

The federation follows 'Leave in term Time Guidance' and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations.

Taking holidays in term time affects a pupil's education and we do not expect parents to take term-time leave. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in term time. Holiday dates are published in school and on the website.

The school recognises that taking pupils out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries, in order to be satisfied that the pupil is not at risk. The school may contact outside agencies in order to ensure that a visit is legitimate and safe for the pupil.

In **exceptional circumstances**, a parent may request absence leave for their pupil. The school must receive appropriate evidence and documentation that the leave is **unavoidable**: for example, death certificates, medical evidence of any hospitalisation and proof of any visa applications.

A pupil can be removed from the school roll after a period of unauthorised absence of 20 school days. Parents have to re-apply for a school place on their return and would not necessarily be allocated a school of their choice.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the pupil, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide pupils with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty. If you have exceptional circumstances, which have led you to request leave in term time for your pupils, please complete the required form, which you can obtain from the Help Desk. The Head Teacher will then make a decision, on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a pupil to be absent during term time.

Penalty Notices

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice issued by the Local Authority.

If a pupil is taken out of school without the Head Teacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken. Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007: Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.

If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error. Section 444(1) Education Act 1996: "If you are the parent of a pupil of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence." The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per pupil, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:

- Penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each pupil.
- Parent includes any person who is not a parent of the pupil but who has parental responsibility for the pupil (and applies whether or not that person lives with the pupil) or who has care of him/her.
- These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in parents having a criminal record.

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 can change policy to:

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.

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.