



Westcliff High School for Girls

Attendance Policy

September 2014

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KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE SCHOOL 2014 - 2015

HEADTEACHER

Paul Hayman (Headteacher)

DEPUTY HEADTEACHER

Kathy Herlock (Deputy Headteacher)

ATTENDANCE ADMINISTRATOR

Marion Bassett

CHILD AND FAMILY EARLY INTERVENTION OFFICER/CHILD LICENSING OFFICER

Michelle Jarvis

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

The school attaches considerable importance to the maintenance of high levels of attendance. The school will abide by the current regulations on attendance, provide a regular flow of information about levels of attendance in all year groups and take action to correct the poor attendance patterns of individual children.

We are aware of the importance of maintaining high motivation amongst pupils to attend and we recognise the influence of worthwhile extra-curricular activities, good relationships, a well organised curriculum and good pastoral care and discipline on children's desire to attend school.

The school will communicate its own concerns for high attendance to parents and pupils.

2. ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS

2.1 Unauthorised absence

Absence for which no satisfactory reason has been given will be classified as unauthorised and marked in the register as an "N". If parents cannot provide a valid reason for their daughter/ son's absence which is acceptable to the school then the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

Unauthorised absences include:

- ❖ Absence where no explanation is received;
- ❖ Truancy;
- ❖ Absence in order to look after the house, a parent or younger brothers or sisters;
- ❖ Absence to go shopping, go to a show, go for a long weekend etc.

Late (after registration closes at 8.50) or absence for which the school does not receive a valid explanation e.g. truancy, shopping, long weekend, absence for which school's authorisation was sought and was refused.

Those activities that the Governors have deemed to qualify as authorised absence are listed in Appendix 1.

2.2 Actions following unauthorised absence

In the case of truancy parents will be informed immediately and a suitable punishment given. The sanctions for truancy are listed in the Behaviour Management Policy.

Where parentally-condoned unauthorised absence occurs the Deputy Headteacher will refer the matter to the Child and Family Early Intervention Officer/Child Licensing Officer.

2.3 Authorised absence

Authorised absence occurs by reason of illness and where leave has been given in advance for medical or dental appointments. Details of the procedure for pupils to leave school during the day to keep an appointment are in Appendix 2. The Governors have defined those activities of a clearly educational nature for which leave of absence may be given (Appendix 1). Where leave of absence is granted for these activities the pupil's absence may be marked as authorised.

Absence may also be authorised for religious observance on a day set aside exclusively for this purpose or for an agreed period following a family bereavement.

Authorised absences will be recorded as "C". Requests for leave of absence which fall outside illness and medical and dental appointments must be referred from the tutor to the Attendance Administrator who may consult the Learning Manager if necessary.

2.4 Leave of Absence

The Attendance Administrator may agree leave of absence for the other categories listed by Governors (Appendix 1). They must always insist on the appropriate forms being completed by parents. Authorisation must be sent to parents by letter signed by the Headteacher. The Attendance Administrator will prepare the appropriate letter.

Requests for leave of absence which lie outside the Governors' Policy and the other categories listed under 2.3 must either be refused or referred to the Headteacher by the Attendance Administrator.

The school prospectus and the annual Governors' Report to Parents will include the required data on rates of authorised and unauthorised attendance.

Leave of absence will not be granted to a pupil to be employed during school hours or to take a holiday except under regulations 11 and 12 of the Education (Schools and F.E.) Regulations 1981.

Regulation 11 provides:

Leave of absence from school shall not be granted to enable a pupil to undertake employment (whether paid or unpaid), during school hours except:

- (a) Employment in pursuance of arrangements made or approved under the Education (Work Experience) Act 1973;
- (b) Employment for the purpose of taking part in a performance within the meaning of Section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, under the authority of a licence granted under that section, or

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- (c) Employment abroad for a purpose mentioned in Section 25 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933, where a licence has been granted under that section.

Regulation 12 provides:

- (a) In pursuance of arrangements made by the Governing Body of a school, on application made by the parent or other person having charge of a pupil he may be granted leave of absence from the school to enable him to partake of an annual family holiday or to go away on an annual holiday.
- (b) Save in exceptional circumstances a pupil shall not in pursuance of this Regulation be granted more than 2 weeks leave of absence.

3. PROVIDING INFORMATION ON ATTENDANCE

A report will be computer generated every 4 weeks by the Attendance Administrator.

Any pupil, showing 4 broken weeks attendance during that period, will be placed on first day contact and the Attendance Administrator will telephone parents on the first morning absence.

In the case of persistent illness a medical certificate will be requested.

The Attendance Officer will provide a copy of the computer generated report for the Learning Managers. All Learning Managers are required to check for patterns of absence and the provision of satisfactory letters of explanation from parents for each absence. Every absence must be explained in a satisfactory manner by a letter from the parents.

The Attendance Officer will provide tutors with a copy of the Absence Report to inform them of unauthorised absences in their tutor groups.

Tutors are required to follow up any absence for which the school has not received a satisfactory explanation.

If the tutor is unable to obtain a satisfactory explanation the Attendance Administrator will pursue the enquiry by phone, letter or by referring the matter to the Child and Family Early Intervention Officer/Child Licensing Officer.

If a satisfactory explanation is not received, then the absence will be marked unauthorised and a letter will be sent to the parents informing them of this.

Apart from pupils suffering from a serious medical complaint for which we have a Doctor's authorisation any pupil with more than 10 half-day absences in any half-term period must result in action being taken by the Learning Manager.

This action may either be:

- A letter expressing our great concern and asking parents to come in school to discuss their daughter/ son's absences **or** a home visit from the Child and Family Early Intervention Officer/Child Licensing Officer.

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- Subsequent actions will depend on the nature of the problem, but all cases must be pursued until they have been resolved.

The computerised registration system (SIMs) calculates school attendance on a daily basis.

The Learning Managers will use this information to take action as appropriate regarding individual pupils with poor attendance records. They will also record percentage statistics.

The school should aim to keep annual percentage absence below 95%. This represents an annual rate of 21 half-days absence for every child in the year group. Any figure above this is certainly too high and the school would expect Years 7, 8 and 9 to have absence rates that are well below this level.

The Attendance Administrator will provide the half-termly figures for each form to the Deputy Headteacher and display them on the staff board.

The SIMs Data Manager will prepare the annual figures for the DfE and such other statistics on attendance as may be required from time to time.

Past data on each pupil's attendance must be held on the pupil's file. It is therefore essential that the copy of each report to be held on file after the attendance data has been written on the report by the Attendance Administrator. Where this has not been the case the Learning Managers must make suitable arrangement for the information to be placed in the pupil's file in some other way.

Past registers will be held for 5 years for reference purposes. It is the responsibility of the Attendance Administrator to ensure that this occurs.

The Child and Family Early Intervention Officer/Child Licensing Officer routinely provides details of poor attendance records when she visits the school each half term. The Learning Manager must check each one of these pupils and, unless we have knowledge of serious illness writes to the parents expressing concern.

4. PROCEDURES FOR RECORDING PUPILS' ATTENDANCE

All pupils must attend registration between 8.35 and 8.50 a.m. and between 1.15 and 1.25 p.m. when the register will be taken.

All pupils will be registered at the start of every lesson. This will be conducted by the completion of the SIMs register by the subject teacher.

5. THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMPT ACTION BY FORM TUTORS AND LEARNING MANAGERS

It is very important to break the habit of poor attendance as soon as possible. It is therefore essential that the Attendance Administrator contacts parents and/or pupils as soon as they see a pattern of poor attendance occurring.

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Learning Managers in Years 7 to 9 should communicate with parents but in the older year groups the pupils should be interviewed as well. The damage being done to the pupil's vocational and academic opportunities through poor attendance must be stressed. Poor attenders in Years 7 to 9 should be helped to make friends and join in as many activities as possible.

In the Sixth Form poor attendance may ultimately result in a student being asked to leave the school. However, before this situation is reached every effort must be made to discover the reasons and to rectify the situation. The Learning Manager is responsible for undertaking a thorough investigation and for providing support and advice.

6. AWARDS FOR GOOD ATTENDANCE

At the annual awards afternoons in July and October awards for very good attendance will be given to pupils in Years 7 to 13.

Form tutors should encourage high attendance by indicating the importance of coming to school every day and complimenting students on their excellent attendance.

Form tutors can also discourage poor attendance by taking an interest in the reasons why a particular child is frequently absent and finding ways to encourage them to attend, e.g. help them to make friends, to take part in lunchtime activities etc.

7. COMMUNICATION OF GENERAL CONCERNS TO PARENTS

The school prospectus and handbook will emphasise the importance of good attendance and outline school policy.

The detailed policy will be sent to parents at the start of every school year.

The school's policy on attendance and holidays will be discussed at the New Parents' meeting in June.

Good attendance will be highlighted as a prerequisite to success at the Year 9 and Year 11 option choices Evenings.

Attendance will be a regular item in the Parents Newsletter.

Appendix 1

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Parents may occasionally wish to apply to the Headteacher for leave of absence for their daughters/sons. Forms available from the School Office should be completed and returned to the Learning Manager at least one month before leave is required.

Leave of absence for holiday purposes is granted entirely at the discretion of the Headteacher and Governing Body. Following recent advice from the Department of Education the Governing Body has drawn up the following guidelines.

Up to two weeks of leave of absence for holidays during term-time should be authorised where:

1. Parents are prevented from going on their annual family holiday during normal school holidays because of their work or other circumstances. (This does not include financial reasons for choosing to take holidays during term-time).
2. The opportunity for a pupil to go somewhere or do something which is quite exceptional - the "once in a lifetime" holiday.
3. Where 2 or 3 days of the family's annual two-week holiday overlap with term-time.

Leave of absence will not usually be authorised in the following circumstances:

1. Children accompanying their parents on a business trip.
2. "Second" holidays, e.g. skiing trips.
3. Booking the holiday during term-time because it is less expensive than in school holidays.
4. The attendance pattern of the pupil concerned already shows attendance at below 85% (unless this is due to one or more periods of severe illness or hospital treatment) and teachers consider that further absence will severely jeopardise academic progress.

Authorisation will also be given for pupils to undertake activities of a clearly educational nature. There is a different application form for leave of this kind, which will be given for activities such as those listed below.

1. Interviews for jobs and higher education.
2. University Open Days (Sixth Form).
3. Work experience or work shadowing.
4. Music examinations, festivals and performances.
5. Approved sporting activities.
6. Duke of Edinburgh Award and similar schemes.
7. Participation in approved public performances (maximum of 5 days including rehearsals).

Unauthorised absence is recorded in pupils' reports (copies are held on file) and is reported to the Education Welfare Department.

Parents have a right of appeal to the Chairman of Governors if their request for leave is turned down by the Headteacher.

The School will always set work for children who are absent because of illness. In all other circumstances it is up to the pupil and their parents to make suitable arrangements for catching up what has been missed.

Appendix 2

PROCEDURE FOR PUPILS LEAVING SCHOOL DURING THE SCHOOL DAY IN ORDER TO KEEP AN APPOINTMENT

1. A letter requesting permission for the pupil to leave school to keep an appointment must be provided by the parent or guardian.

The letter should state the time the pupil is to leave school and the time of the appointment. If it is not highly confidential the nature of the appointment should be given e.g. medical treatment, dental treatment, chiropodist.

2. The letter is to be signed and dated by the form tutor and RETURNED to the pupil so that she can show it to the subject teacher when she leaves the lesson to keep her appointment.
3. When the pupil signs out in the school office she must ensure that she gives the letter signed and dated by the form tutor to the Attendance Administrator.
4. No pupil in Years 7 to 11 will be allowed out of school unless permission has been asked for by parent or guardian.
5. If the parent or guardian forgets to write a letter then a telephone confirmation will be accepted. One of the office staff should type up the request for the form tutor to sign and date.
6. Members of staff should not allow pupils in Year 7 to 11 to leave their lessons to keep an appointment without some communication from the parent or guardian which has been signed by the form tutor.

Appendix 3

PUNCTUALITY OF PUPILS - INFORMATION FOR TEACHING STAFF

1. LATENESS TO SCHOOL (FORM TUTOR)

1.1 Lateness between 8.35 and 8.50 a.m. and after 1.25 p.m.

Pupils who arrive at registration after 8.35 a.m. in the morning or after 1.25 pm. in the afternoon must be marked late (L) in the register.

Excuses regarding transport problems may be accepted on the odd occasion but where a pupil is persistently late action should be taken to find out whether or not the excuse is valid. The onus is on the pupil to provide written evidence to her tutor, e.g. a note from home or a note from another teacher who detained her.

Excuses should not be accepted in the afternoon.

Three lates in one term (without valid reasons) for Year's 7 -11 are cause for a detention after school. The form tutor should place the girl on detention in the normal way.

The Attendance Administrator will provide a list of all the buses that are known to have arrived late during that week in the registers on Friday afternoons or known train delays (eg death on the rail)

1.2 Lateness after 8.50 a.m.

Pupils who arrive after registration is over must fill in a late slip and sign in at the School Office.

A pupil who has been late must give her tutor the late slip at the afternoon registration as proof of signing in and so that the tutor can read the pupil's reason for being late and her arrival time.

Failure to produce a slip is very serious as it means that the student has not followed school procedures and we have no record of her arrival. This should result in a school detention whatever excuses are offered.

Arrival after 8.50 a.m. without a valid reason must be marked as unauthorised absence. In effect this is truancy and the parents must be informed and an appropriate punishment given.

1.3 Registration Time

The periods 8.35 to 8.50 a.m. and 1.15 to 1.25p.m. are NOT times when pupils may be released from the classroom for any purpose other than going to assembly, unless they are requested to see another teacher or have a specific duty to perform.

This is NOT a time for visiting the toilet, seeing teachers, getting change from the office, going to lost property, making a phone call etc. Pupils should use the period prior to 8.25 a.m., break time, lunchtime and after school for these purposes.

Form tutors are asked to refuse pupils' permission to leave the room other than in an emergency.

1.4 Spot Checks

From time to time spot checks will be done on pupil lateness and pupils out of registration. Tutors who have not complied with the school's requirements will be asked to explain their actions.

2. LATENESS TO LESSONS (SUBJECT TEACHERS)

Teachers should dismiss their classes on time and not detain pupils.

Pupils who arrive more than 5 minutes after the lesson was scheduled to start are late and this should be noted with an L in the SIMs register. Excuses should only be accepted in exceptional circumstances and where the pupil can bring a signed note from another teacher excusing their lateness.

As with lateness to registration three late arrivals during a term to a particular subject's lessons should result in the subject teacher placing the pupil in an after school detention.

3. ACTIONS FOLLOWING LATENESS

If pupils arrive late to registration without signing in at the Front Office they will be issued with a school detention by their Form Tutor.

If pupils are late three times in a term they will be issued a half-hour after school detention by their Form Tutor.

Each subsequent late will result in further half-hour after-school detentions.

The Learning Manager will monitor the punctuality of their year group on a fortnightly basis.

Persistent lateness will result in referral to the Child and Family Early Intervention Officer/Child Licensing Officer by the Deputy Headteacher.

4. GENERAL POINTS

Teachers should establish these procedures at the start of the school year with their classes.

Starting your lessons punctually will encourage the pupils to arrive on time.

Persistent lateness must be tackled by the tutor or subject teacher concerned. Where necessary enlist the help of the pupil's Learning Manager to contact the parents and bring pressure to bear on the situation.

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5. REGISTER SYMBOLS USED BY WHSG

B	Educated off site
C	Leave of absence authorised (music/ dance exams, family funeral
E	Formally excluded
G	Annual family holiday (for which leave has <i>not</i> been granted)
H	Annual family holiday (for which leave has been granted)
I	Absence covered by a parent's note saying that their son/daughter was ill
J	Attending interview, e.g. with a prospective employer, or with another education establishment
M	Treatment/Medical/dental/hospital.
O	Absent from school without authorisation (no notification by parent)
P	Approved sporting activity.
R	Day of religious observance in the religious body to which the parents belong.
S	Study leave.
V	Educational visit.
W	Work experience.
L	Late (before 8.50 a.m.)