



Westminster

Primary

School

*Nurturing Minds...
Inspiring Excellence*

Attendance Policy - Pupils

Ratified by trustees:

November 2022

To Be Reviewed:

November 2025

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Statement of intent

Westminster Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

Westminster Primary School is committed to:

- Following the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable: -

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

1. Legal framework

- 1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Education Act 1996
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
 - Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
 - Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- 1.2. This policy also has regard to non-statutory DfE guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - DfE (2016) 'School attendance'
 - DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- 1.3. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:
 - School Complaints Procedures
 - Behaviour Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

- 2.1. The Trust Board has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Attendance Policy and procedures of Westminster Primary School.
- 2.2. The Trustee Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- 2.3. The Trustee Board has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's School Complaints Procedure.
- 2.4. The Headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Attendance Policy and procedures of the school.
- 2.5. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for following the Attendance Policy and for ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- 2.6. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.

- 2.7. Parents are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time.
- 2.8. Parents are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

- **“Absence”** as:
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Not attending school for any reason.
- An **“authorised absence”** as:
 - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
 - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
 - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
 - An absence due to a family emergency.
- An **“unauthorised absence”** as:
 - Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
 - Truancy before or during the school day.
 - Absences which have never been properly explained.
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
 - Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
 - Leaving school for no reason during the day.
- **“Persistent absenteeism”** as:
 - Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year **for any reason**.

4. Training of staff

- 4.1. The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils.
- 4.2. Teachers and support staff will receive information on this policy as part of their induction.
- 4.3. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

5. Pupil expectations

- 5.1. Pupils are expected to attend school every day and have attendance of at least 97% throughout the year.

6. Absence procedures

- 6.1. Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence.
- 6.2. A phone call will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school.
- 6.3. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Parent Support Advisor who is responsible for monitoring pupil attendance.
- 6.4. If a pupil's attendance drops below 90 percent, the Parent Support Advisor will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the parents.

7. Contact information

- 7.1. Parents are responsible for providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- 7.2. Parents are responsible for updating the school if their details change.

8. Parent Support Advisor

- 8.1. If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the Parent Support Advisor who will attempt to resolve the situation by agreement.
- 8.2. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Parent Support Advisor has the power in liaison with the Headteacher to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents via fast-track procedures.

9. Lateness

- 9.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.
- 9.2. The school bell will ring at 8.40 am. At this time, pupils should be lined up outside ready to come into their classrooms.
- 9.3. Registers are marked by 8:50 am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- 9.4. The register closes at 9:20 am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence (U code) if they do not attend school before this time.
- 9.5. After lunch, registers are marked by 1.10pm for Infants and by 1.40pm for Juniors. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

- 9.6. The register closes at 1.45pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.
- 9.7. Pupils attending after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but this will count as a late mark.

10. Term-time leave

- 10.1. At Westminster Primary School, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- 10.2. The headteacher is unable to authorise holidays during term-time.
- 10.3. The headteacher is only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave.
- 10.4. The headteacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school during term time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the headteacher.
- 10.5. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.
- 10.6. If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.

11. Leave during lunch times

- 11.1. Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the school – it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises. The parent must accompany their child back to school after they have had their lunch at home.
- 11.2. Only pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are allowed to exit the school premises without a parent / carer accompanying them at the start of lunchtime in order that they can go home for their lunch. This is only with the written permission from their parents. Parents are required to submit a written request, indicating that they are happy for their child to walk home alone for their lunch and then return back to school on their own. Children whether accompanied or unaccompanied are required to return to school in a timely manner.
- 11.3. Our lunch time hours are 12:30pm - 1:30pm for the KS2 pupils. Once a week (for Year 5 only) the lunch hour runs from 12.00pm to 1.00pm due to a weekly swim session. The timing change for the one day will be communicated to parents at the start of the school year. Pupils will leave the school premises within 10 minutes of the start of lunch and will return no later than 5 minutes before the end of lunch.

- 11.4. A member of staff will be available at the school office before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to allow them entry back into the school building. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff has given their permission.

12. Unauthorised Absence

- 12.1. Unauthorised absence means any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.
- 12.2. All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.
- 12.3. All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 8.50am and 1:00pm for Infants and 1.30pm for Juniors, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically.
- 12.4. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must be collected by an adult and signed out at the school office and signed back in again on their return.
- 12.5. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a child has been absent without authorisation.
- 12.6. If unauthorised absence is suspected, the headteacher is notified, who will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.
- 12.7. The following procedures will be taken in the event of unauthorised absence:
- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the unauthorised absence and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
 - If any further unauthorised absence occurs, then the school will consider implementing a Fast-Track process which may lead to a penalty notice.
 - A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt unauthorised absence, inappropriate parentally condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

13. Missing children

- 13.1. Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they are collected by a parent/carer.
- 13.2. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher immediately.
 - The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
 - A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
 - The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - The library
 - Any outbuildings
 - The school grounds
 - Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
 - If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
 - If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, then the police will be contacted.
 - The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- 13.3. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has any special educational needs and disabilities, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- 13.4. When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- 13.5. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.
- 13.6. The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- 13.7. Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.
- 13.8. A written report will be produced and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

14. Religious observances

- 14.1. The school will follow Birmingham Local Authority to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals.
- 14.2. Parents are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

15. Appointments

- 15.1. As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 15.2. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to the school office.
- 15.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent/carer.
- 15.4. Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

16. Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities

- 16.1. Under Section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, are required to obtain a licence from the Local Authority (LA) which authorises their absence(s).
- 16.2. Where a pupil requests to be absent for a performance or activity, the individual or organisation responsible for organising, producing or running the activity/performance is required to request a licence from the pupil's home LA.
- 16.3. The organiser is required to allow sufficient time for the LA to process the request – the LA will refuse to consider an application if the performance or activity is less than 21 days away.
- 16.4. The LA will only approve a licence application once it is satisfied that:
 - The pupil's education, health and wellbeing will not suffer; and
 - The conditions of the licence will be observed.
- 16.5. The LA will impose any conditions it considers necessary to ensure that the pupil is fit to take part in the performance/activity, that there will be proper provision for the pupil's wellbeing, and that the pupil's education will not suffer.
- 16.6. The school will make additional arrangements for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education.

- 16.7. The organiser of the performance/activity is responsible for ensuring these arrangements are carried out.
- 16.8. The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence.
- 16.9. The above requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:
- For not less than six hours a week; and
 - During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
 - On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
 - For not more than five hours on any such day.
- 16.10. Where the applicant is unable to specify the dates of the performance/activity, and the LA decides to grant the application, the LA will specify that the pupil can only take part in the activity for a specified number of days within a six-month period.
- 16.11. Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation is needed from the school.
- 16.12. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day.
- 16.13. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 97 percent.
- 16.14. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.
- 16.15. The LA will be satisfied that arrangements for chaperones, accommodation, place of performance and rehearsal, and travel are suitable before it grants the application.
- 16.16. The LA may decide to place restrictions on any performance or activity – this can include maximum hours and breaks.
- 16.17. The maximum number of consecutive days that a child can perform is six – this applies to performances only.
- 16.18. Pupils who perform are entitled to a break of at least 14 days following the last performance where the pupil has been performing on the maximum number of consecutive days over a period of eight weeks, unless the period to which the licence applies is less than 60 days.

- 16.19. A licence is also required where a pupil will be absent from school and conducting a performance or activity abroad.
- 16.20. The LA is responsible for enforcing all licence requirements; they may carry out inspections of the premises:
- Where rehearsals during the performance period are taking place.
 - Where performances or activities are taking place; or
 - Where the pupil is receiving their education, in order to check that licensing conditions are being met.
- 16.21. The LA has the power to amend or revoke existing licences at any time.
- 16.22. If the LA refuses to grant a licence, it will provide reasons for this decision in writing to the individual/organisation applying for the licence.
- 16.23. The organiser of the performance/activity has the right to appeal the decision to a magistrates' court, including its refusal, revocation or variation, and against any condition under which a licence is granted or an approval is given.

17. Young carers

- 17.1. The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.
- 17.2. The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.
- 17.3. The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

18. Monitoring and review

- 18.1. The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- 18.2. Westminster Primary School's attendance target is 98 percent.
- 18.3. Details of our attendance levels can be found on our fortnightly newsletter.
- 18.4. This policy is reviewed every three years by the headteacher; the next scheduled review date for this policy is November 2025.
- 18.5. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and parents.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Westminster Primary School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. A weekly class attendance report is compiled by the Parent Support Advisor and attendance figures are given to SLT for attendance assemblies.
2. An attendance assembly takes place once a week for both Key stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils. The class with the best attendance in KS1 and KS2 is awarded a certificate. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the Parent Support Advisor.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are investigated by the Parent Support Advisor.
4. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls to 94 percent, the Parent Support Advisor speaks to the pupil in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. The Parent Support Advisor completes section 6 of the Early Help Assessment and also makes a phone call home to discuss this with parents, if necessary. The Parent Support Advisor advises parents regarding the Early Help agenda.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below 93 percent, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. The letter also has an attached leaflet outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance. The parent is invited for an informal meeting and to complete Section 7 of the Early Help Assessment and to gain consent to complete a family connect form for support.
7. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90 percent, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now a concern and will be monitored. The Parent Support Advisor will contact the parents to discuss the Fast-Track Procedure and support to be put in place to improve attendance.
8. The pupil's attendance is monitored for four weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting (School Attendance Review Meeting [SARM]) in school with the Parent Support Advisor and a member of the SLT to set targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral to Fast-Track is made online to the Education Legal Intervention Team (ELIT).
9. After the four -week monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the SLT to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance.

Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to 98 percent.

10. If targets are not met, the Parent Support Advisor makes a referral to ELIT. ELIT protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A twelve-week monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents if there is no improvement, a fixed-penalty noticed is issued.

FAST TRACK TO ATTENDANCE – STEPS

- A whole 'School Attendance' letter is circulated to parents via post or email and posted on website. When a child's attendance falls below 93%, a letter is sent out to parents outlining concerns about attendance
- The school will complete the 'Signs of safety and wellbeing' (3 houses form) with the child
- Parents are invited to school for informal meeting to offer support to improve attendance, e.g referral to school nurse, early help response needed.
- The school will issue a helpful medical absence letter to further support improvement with attendance.
- The pupil has at least one session of unauthorised absence. The school will call a formal 'School Attendance Review Meeting' (SARM).
- If the pupil then has further unauthorised absence adding up to 10 sessions in total over the previous 12 calendar months, a 'Formal warning Notice' is sent to each parent with an up-to-date attendance printout. A legal action leaflet is also sent out.
- If further unauthorised absence has occurred within 12 school weeks of the warning notice, the school completes an ELIT fast-track referral form online.