

Wapping High School

Attendance Policy

2020/2021



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Appendix 1: attendance codes

This Policy represents our commitment to striving for 100% attendance, which is achieved by many of our students. It sets out the principles, procedures and practices the school will undertake. Strategies, sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor attendance and punctuality are also detailed, as well as rewards for, and benefits of, good attendance. This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published annually in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

Principles

- Receiving a full-time, suitable education is a student's legal entitlement.
- It is parents' and carers' legal responsibility to ensure this happens.
- Attending school regularly aids intellectual, social and emotional development.
- Attending school regularly safeguards the welfare of students whilst they are not in the care of their parents.
- All students whose attendance is poor will be treated as vulnerable.

These principles are enshrined in British law within the Education Act 1996, the Children Act 1989, and other associated pieces of legislation.

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance and punctuality by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Aims of the Policy

- To ensure that all students attend as near full-time as possible, in order to maximise their educational achievement and social development.
- To discharge the school's duty to safeguard its students to be best of its ability.
- To ensure that all those responsible for children's education, including parents, carers, staff and governors understand and accept their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- To minimise absence from school, thereby reduce and prevent levels of persistent absence through early intervention.
- To improve the life chances of Wapping High students and prepare them to be fully contributing citizens when they reach adulthood.

Policy objectives

- To safeguard the welfare, health, social and emotional development of students.
- To reduce and prevent cases of persistent absence.
- To eliminate term time holidays/leave of absence.
- To promote commitment to education and high achievement.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Promoting Attendance

The Governors, Head Teacher and staff will use all possible opportunities to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality. These will include the home/school agreement, newsletters, rewards and incentives for good or significantly improving attendance.

Staffing

Pastoral Team information

Attendance & Welfare Officer (AWO):

Mr Bevin Hay (bevinhay@wappinghigh.org)

Heads of House (HoH):

Ms Ingram (Head of Tyburn House) tiffanyingram@wappinghigh.org

Mr Webb (Acting Head of Fleet House) harrywebb@wappinghigh.org

Assistant Head Teacher for Attendance:

W. Overill (willoverill@wappinghigh.org)

Teachers, Tutors and other supporting staff

- Take the register every tutor time (8:30-8:45) and for every timetabled lesson using the correct codes, and submitting this information via epraise (or SIMS).
- In the event of IT issues use paper registers and send to school reception quickly as possible.
- The person responsible for taking a register is the member of staff who sees a student in the first 10 minutes of a lesson.
- External cover staff will have the procedure for recording attendance to lessons explained to them on arrival to school by a member of the administration team.
- In the event of a school trip or other off site visit, a list of those participating students must be left with the AWO or appropriate member of the administration team.
- School administrative staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system, sharing this information with the AWO.

Tutors

- Inform and discuss with students the safeguarding implications of frequent non-attendance and lateness, signposting that further action is expected when working with targeted students and their families when regular attendance is a concern.
- Educate students in their tutor group, at least every fortnight, in the importance of having good attendance and punctuality, using attendance data provided.
- Have an understanding of how any attendance and punctuality issues within their form group might affect the academic progress of their tutees and set and monitor targets for tutees in this area if a student has lower than target attendance and punctuality, liaising with the AWO, HoH and Learning Mentors as appropriate.
- As a part of their pastoral care of students in their tutor group tutors should discuss reasons for absence and lateness with their tutees and challenge them when they think a student is not making every effort to come to school.
- Ask the AWO to contact home if they have a concern and a student's attendance or punctuality needs investigating

Attendance & Welfare Officer (AWO)

- Take responsibility for documenting all home contact, which should include phone calls and letters home that formally address attendance and punctuality concerns, meeting with parents, formulating appropriate Attendance Contracts and supporting with Pastoral Support Plans.
- Produce displays for daily attendance per house and weekly attendance for all students.
- Refer low attenders to Tower Hamlets as required, in line with agreed procedures. This must be done where attendance is persistently below 90% despite intervention, where the student goes missing unexpectedly, or if the student misses school for 10 consecutive days.
- Maintain a database to show all actions and referrals made for students on roll whose attendance or punctuality is a concern.
- Advise the headteacher on Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) and issue parents and carers with Court Warning Letters and FPN Warning Letters as appropriate, should unauthorised attendance or chronic lateness lead to a student being (at risk of) persistently absent from school. Wapping High School follows Tower Hamlets guidance on the issuing of FPN and when to refer to court.
- Communicate with Tower Hamlets to make referrals for Fixed Penalty Notices and Court Action and receive feedback about previous referrals.
- Keep copies of all formal communication on students' file.
- Seek advice/support from the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Attendance.
- Monitor and enter data in SIMS. Work with Form Tutors and Heads of House to monitor and pursue non-attendance.

- Support the Assistant Head Teacher in collating and analysing data for reporting to the Head Teacher and Governing body as required.
- Upload relevant documents regarding attendance to CPOMS to ensure that any safeguarding concerns are shared with the DSL and deputy DSLs.
- The AWO must also highlight any attendance or safeguarding issues that might warrant a referral to Children's Social Care.
- Coordinate Attendance Panels, where appropriate, in conjunction with Tower Hamlets for those families are at risk of a court referral for an FPN.

Heads of House (HoH)

- Raise awareness of the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality to tutors and year groups.
- Encourage excellent and improving attendance and punctuality via a system of praise and rewards.
- Achieve targets set for students and the year group.
- Support Form Tutors and work with the Attendance Officer to reduce absence by early intervention
- With the AWO attend meetings with students with attendance concerns or at review meetings for students with persistent absence (PA)

Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Attendance and Punctuality.

- Set attendance targets for the school which are in line or better than those set for the Local Authority.
- Monitor and analyse school attendance data, reporting to the Head Teacher and Governing body as required.
- Formulate systems with HoH and AWO for rewarding students with both improving and excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Liaise with Heads of House and Attendance and Welfare Officer regarding attendance matters.
- Review safeguarding actions on attendance for students, especially those who are PA or CME, weekly with AWO.

The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The link governors for Safeguarding and Attendance are:

Jake Kemp - jakekemp@wappinghigh.org and

Marie McMahon - mariemcmahon@wappinghigh.org

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

4. Recording of attendance including further actions

Procedure for registration of students

- Students arrive at school no later than 8:25am.
- All students arrive promptly at the tutor base at 8:30am where a class register is taken by the class teacher.
- All registers are to be taken by 8.45am to account for students that are present.

- The Attendance Officer will check that registers have been taken and remind staff to complete any outstanding registers.
- A daily reminder is sent to inform staff on any outstanding registers from the Attendance Officer.

Procedure for late students

- Any student arriving after 8:30am is deemed to be late to school and will be recorded as late for further action to be considered, including the sitting of a late detention.
- If a student is later after 8:45 then this is deemed unacceptable lateness and a letter to this effect is sent out to parents/carers to inform them that persistent lateness can result in the issuing of a fixed penalty notice from Tower Hamlets.
- If a student is late they are to be marked in the register with the appropriate symbol, with a letter sent out to parents/carers.
- The AWO will phone parents/carers and obtain a reason as to why the student was late and inform that a detention will be set. If a parent or carer is unavailable then a text will be sent to inform them of their child's detention.
- The AWO will keep a database on all lateness to inform 'late' detentions which are held every Friday.
 - 1 late = 20 minutes detention
 - 2 lates = 40 minute detention
 - 3 or more lates = 1 hour detention
- A student who arrives late:
 - Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L)
 - After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U)
- If a student is persistently late, the Attendance Officer will arrange a meeting with a parent/carers. Notification of meeting is to be sent to a form tutor and pastoral team. At the meeting the Attendance and Punctuality policy is revisited and a contract for Attendance and Punctuality will be signed by the student, a parent/carers and a representative on behalf of the school, detailing support and strategies to be followed.
- If after the signing of an Attendance and Punctuality contract, the student is continuously late, then a decision will be taken to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice under the guidelines laid out by Tower Hamlets.

Attendance Register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

(See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.)

- The register for the first session will be taken at 8:30am and will be kept open until 9:30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:00pm.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Daily actions on attendance from the AWO:

- records any student absence from voicemail or email .
- procures a list of unauthorised absences at 8:45
- sends a text message to be sent to parents of students who are not in school once all registers have been collated
- records absences are on the Daily Absence Spreadsheet, detailing phone calls received and reason provided for absence
- Daily Absence Spreadsheet emailed to all staff from AWO with specific actions recorded for individual students as necessary
- Updated Daily Absence spreadsheet saved by AWO on Google drive.
- Daily attendance figures for Fleet and Tyburn houses are displayed by the AWO.

First Day Absence Contact

- Parents are expected to notify the school by **9:00am** if their child is unable to attend for any unavoidable reason, such as illness.
- If the school does not receive notification it will send a text and/or telephone on the first day of absence, to try to ascertain the reason.
- First day contact will be carried out as early as possible in the school day, in order to notify parents whose children may have set off for school but not arrived, as quickly as possible.

How to report your child as absent from school

- Call 0203 597 3670 Ext 691 to speak to Mr Hay (AWO)
- Via Parent Mail
- Email: studentabsence@wappinghigh.org

Second Day Absence Contact

- If the child is still absent on the second day without contact from the family, a telephone call will be made to the home. The family may be asked to come to school for a meeting.
- Daily Absence spreadsheet is updated to show 2nd day of unauthorised absence: colour coordinated to highlight continued absence.
- Letter sent by AWO to parent/carer to acknowledge second day of unauthorised absence.

Continuing Absence Procedures

- Refer low attenders to Tower Hamlets as required, in line with agreed procedures. This must be done where attendance is persistently below 90% despite intervention, where the student goes missing unexpectedly, or if the student misses school for 10 consecutive days.
- Maintain a database to show all actions and referrals made for students on roll whose attendance or punctuality is a concern.
- Issue parents and carers with Court Warning Letters and Fixed Penalty Notice Warning Letters as appropriate, should unauthorised attendance lead to a student being (at risk of) persistently absent from school.
- Communicate with Attendance Welfare link to make referrals for Fixed Penalty Notices and Court Action and receive feedback about previous referrals.
- Keep copies of all formal communication on students' file.
- Seek advice/support from the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Attendance.

- Monitor and enter data in SIMS. Work with Form Tutors and Heads of House to monitor and pursue non-attendance.
- Support the Assistant Head Teacher in collating and analysing data for reporting to the Head Teacher and Governing body as required.

Frequent/Persistent Absence Procedures

- Daily trawls of the registers will be made to identify students with a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA), that is to say absence of 10% or more in a half term.
- The Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Attendance will be responsible for identification of any emerging concerns and putting in place actions for each pupil of concern.
- Initially the school will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers, but if the pattern continues the school will refer to the relevant health official if the problem appears to be a medical one.
- In cases where there appear to be issues requiring outside intervention to support the family and the student, referral may be made for external agency support.
- All Persistent Absence students and their parents will be subject to an Attendance Contract.
- An Attendance Contract may include allocation of additional in-school or external support.
- Only the Head Teacher or designated member(s) of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence.
- If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised until a satisfactory reason is provided.
- If the reason given is not satisfactory in the school's view, and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as 0 (Unauthorised absent).
- Absence notes received from parents/carers will be kept for the remainder of the academic year; or longer if there are concerns that require further investigation or legal action.
- If a student is persistently late a meeting will be arranged with the family as soon as the pattern is identified.
- We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.
- We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised code (O) and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.
- Please notify the school in advance of any planned absence via the methods listed above for reporting your child absent from school.
- It is the responsibility of parents/carers to produce appointment cards or the like to evidence a planned absence.
- However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to [section 5](#) to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Return to school

- Note for absence handed in by student to reception.
- If a parent has emailed regarding an absence this is saved by the Attendance & Welfare Officer.
- SIMS is amended for reason and is dated.
- A valid medical certificate, prescription or appointment card must be provided by a student in order to authorise an absence.
- An absence will remain as unauthorised if the documentation is not satisfactory.

Legal sanctions

- Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:
 - Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by telephoning the parent in the first instance and where necessary writing to a parent to request medical proof or other such evidence to explain an absence.
 - Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
 - Identify whether the absence is approved or not
 - Identify the correct attendance code to use

- For students whose attendance and/or punctuality fails to improve, after a range of interventions and support measures have been tried by the school, the ultimate consequences may be one of the following:
 - The school may ask the Council to issue a Penalty Notice on its behalf. A Fixed Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60, per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid within 20 days it rises to £120 per parent, per child. If not paid at all, court action will be initiated.
 - The school may ask the Council to initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2500, or even imprisonment.
 - In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.
 - Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.
 - The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:
 - The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
 - One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
 - Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
 - If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Reporting to parents

In-year attendance to date is shown at the top of each of the termly academic reports sent out to parents/carers..

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

- The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.
- We define 'exceptional circumstances' **as significant or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time**
- The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.
- Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:
 - Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.for more detail).
 - Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
 - Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.
 - Family bereavement, attending a funeral abroad.
 - Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the headteacher might approve an absence
 - Interviews at colleges or schools for Year 11 students for post 16 enrollment.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At Wapping High School we recognise and value progress in improving attendance and punctuality. The following is a list of some of the strategies we use:

- letter home celebrating improved attendance
- tutor slides celebrating students attendance
- weekly discussions
- end of term certificates for improved and exemplar attendance
- termly reward trips for exemplar attendance
- regular displays for exemplar attendance

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Bevin Hay (AWO) and Will Overill (AHT). At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy.
- Attitude to Learning (Behaviour policy).

9. Useful information for Parents and Carers

Introduction

At Wapping High School, we aim to encourage all members of the school community to aspire for excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly. Your child should be at school in good time for the start of the school day at 8:25am, whenever the school is open, unless they are genuinely ill or there is some other unavoidable reason.

Children who cease to Attend without Prior Notification (Child Missing in Education - CME):

Some children are reluctant to go to school and say they do not feel well. It is for you, as the adult, to judge whether they are genuinely unwell, or just unwilling. It will be better for them in the long run to go to school, rather than avoid it, as days off mean they will fall further behind and make them even more reluctant. Your job as the parent is to encourage them to attend.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is YOUR legal responsibility and permitting absence without good reason is an offence in law and may result in legal action being taken, or a Penalty Notice being issued.

Learning

Any absence affects the child's learning, and the more they miss the harder it will be for them to catch up. Research has shown that for every percentage point of absence, attainment at GCSE level is significantly lower.

Safeguarding

There is extensive research linking poor school attendance and exclusion with crime and anti-social behaviour, and risk of exploitation by unsuitable adults. For this reason, failure to attend regularly will be regarded as a safeguarding issue.

Understanding absence percentages

You may wonder why a school would be concerned if your child's attendance is not above 95%. This may

make it easier to understand:

- 95% equates to half a day's absence from school every two weeks.
- 90% equates to a day's absence from school every two weeks.
- 85% equates to one and a half day's absence from school every two weeks.
- 80% equates to one whole day's absence from school every week.
- A secondary age child whose attendance is 80% will have missed ONE WHOLE YEAR of education by the time they leave school.

Even the brightest and most enthusiastic learner will find it hard to keep up with their work with these levels of absence. That is why we encourage the highest attendance possible.

What are my responsibilities as a parent?

You must ensure your child attends school regularly. You will be committing an offence if your child fails to attend school regularly without good reason. Only your child's school can authorise an absence. FPNs will be sent to your home by recorded delivery.

Is a warning given?

Warnings are not issued by the Local authority but will be issued directly by school in a formal letter about attendance concerns.

Your contact details

Please make sure that the contact details you have given to the school are kept up to date, so that in the event of an accident, emergency or any other need to contact you we have the correct details. The options for reporting the absence of your child are in section 4 of this policy.

Legal References

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that the 'parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school, or otherwise.'

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18. The Children Act 1989 provides for a number of actions that can be taken to protect children's safety and welfare, on the premise that the welfare of the child is paramount.

Wapping High School collects and stores attendance data, it is used for example to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|------|-------------------------------|---|
| / | Present (am) | Pupils are present at morning registration. |
| \ | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration. |
| L | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before the register has closed. |
| B | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school. |
| D | Dual registered | Pupils are attending a session at another setting where they are also registered. |
| J | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment. |
| P | Sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school. |
| V | Educational trip or visit | Pupils are on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school. |
| W | Work experience | Pupil is on a work experience placement. |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Authorised absence | | |
| C | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances. |
| E | Excluded | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made. |
| H | Authorised holiday | Pupils have been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances. |
| I | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness. |
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment. |
| R | Religious observance | Pupils are taking part in a day of religious observance. |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| S | Study leave | Year 11 pupils are on study leave during their public examinations. |
| T | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence | Pupils from a Traveller community are travelling, as agreed with the school. |
| Unauthorised absence | | |
| G | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school. |
| N | Reason not provided | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time). |
| O | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with the reason for the pupil's absence. |
| U | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed. |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|-------------|---|---|
| X | Not required to be in school | Pupils of non-compulsory school age are not required to attend. |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or a pupil is in custody. |
| Z | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but the pupil has not yet joined the school. |
| # | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day. |