



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Agreed by the School Governors: March 2019

Introduced: Wednesday 24th April 2019

I. INTRODUCTION

Why do we need a policy?

“Our school” fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time and therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours. Every lesson really does count.

Who does the policy apply to?

Our policy applies to all children and young people registered at this school and is therefore shared with parents/carers and pupils on admission to the school.

In law compulsory school age applies to all children from the start of the term commencing on or after the child’s 5th birthday until the last Friday in June during the academic year that the young person becomes 16.

How has the policy been developed?

It has been underpinned by the principles established in the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from both the DfES and Westminster City Council.

What does the policy do?

Although parents have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child’s attendance, the governors and staff at this school will work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure pupils are encouraged and supported. Procedures in this policy will ensure that this happens and that children do not slip through the net.

Why is the policy important?

Every day of education and indeed every lesson matters. In the National Curriculum where there is built in progression, children who are persistently late or absent soon get behind with learning and then do not understand current lessons when they return. The introduction to a lesson and to the school day is crucial to the child’s understanding of their own learning. Children who miss school frequently will undoubtedly have gaps in their learning which will impede their progress and future ability to engage in lessons. This in turn has a knock on effect for their ability to concentrate and for their behaviour. Children who do not understand the lesson will frequently behave inappropriately to cover their inability to engage with the work. Frequent absence has a profound and cumulative effect on achievement.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This policy:

- ensures that all staff in our school are fully aware and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.
- raises awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- ensures that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and on time by setting out their obligation in the school brochure and home school agreement.
- equips children/young people with the skills needed to take responsibility for school attendance and punctuality appropriate to their age and development
- maintains clear effective communication channels on school attendance matters
- develops and implement procedures for identifying, reporting and following up cases of poor attendance and lateness
- supports pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance
- implements procedures to follow up non-attendance in school for all pupils
- establishes a safe environment which demonstrates that *every child matters* and where children/young people can:
 - be healthy
 - stay safe
 - enjoy and achieve
 - make a positive contribution
 - achieve economic well being

3. PROCEDURES

Timing for the school day:

8.25am	Gates Open
8.30am	School Day Starts
8.40am	Class Registers Closed (children arriving <u>in class</u> after this time will be marked late – this is 10 minutes after the start of the school day)
9.00am	Children arriving from 9.00am will receive a ‘U’ in the register. This will impact on the child’s attendance percentage for the child in line with Westminster policy.
4.00pm	End of School: gates open (children picked up from class until 4.10pm)
4.15pm	Gates closed

- Children arriving after the gates close at 8.40am need to get a Late slip from the attendance team. Parents can provide a reason for lateness at this time for the records.
- Children not being collected by parents by 4.15pm will be called by the Headteacher after two instances in a six-week period
- Children attending a medical appointment need to bring an appointment form or complete the school medical form for every absence, and hand this to the office.

Absence from school

- For **two** unauthorised days, in a six-week period, you will receive a warning letter from the school
- If this **rises to four consecutive** days in a six-week period, we will refer the concern to Westminster and this might result in the issuing of a penalty notice
- For **four non-consecutive days** absent in a six-week period, this may result in a referral to Westminster Early Help depending on the level of absence over time

For any absence relating to illness over two days, a medical note must be received or this will be recorded as unauthorised leave.

Authorised leave will be granted in exceptional circumstances and this will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Late to School

If your child arrives at school late (gates open 8.25am, start of day 8.30am, marked late if in class after 8.40am):

- **twice**, in a six-week period, you will receive a letter from the attendance team to share concerns over your child's punctuality.
- **four** times in a six-week period, we will invite you to a meeting with the attendance team and Headteacher to discuss how we can support with punctuality.
- If there is **further lateness**, we may raise this with Westminster Early Help

4. CELEBRATING EXCELLENT ATTENDANCE

- Each week in celebration assembly, the class with the highest attendance and punctuality percentages will win the attendance cup.
- Any children with 100% attendance at the end of each (long) term will have their name placed into a prize draw for a Scooter award for each of our three key stages.
- At the end of the school year there are celebration certificates for children with 100% attendance. Children with 100% attendance will receive a certificate and a £5 book voucher.

5. PUPILS WITH EDUCATION HEALTH CARE PLANS (EHCPs)

- We fully understand that pupils with EHC Plans have specific needs that may require them to attend appointments during the school day. We are fully committed to meeting the needs of these pupils but do require appointment forms to be submitted.
- Pupils with EHC plans whose attendance falls below 90% will be referred by Westminster SEN to the Vulnerable Children's collaborative. Westminster guidance requires the school to refer attendance at this level to the Assistant Director of SEN at Westminster City Council. They will then follow up concerns with parents. In the event that attendance does not improve, a meeting in school with the Assistant Director of SEN will be required.

6. OTHER DETAILS

The Governing Body understands and will fulfil its responsibilities and may appoint a nominated governor or panel of governors for attendance issues.

Parents are welcome to contact Westminster Early Help for further information and advice. Further details online at: www.westminster.gov.uk/school-attendance-and-child-employment

If a pupil on the child protection register is absent for two days without explanation their social worker is notified.

If a pupil is in public care (LAC) the carer, social worker and education co-ordinator will be involved appropriately. (see section on LAC)

Children with EHCPs where there are concerns around their attendance will have a referral made.

March 2019