Expect the Best, Achieve Success

Attendance & Punctuality

Autumn 2025

Agreed by Governors:

Next Review: Autumn 2026

This policy will be reviewed annually and will be published to all staff, parents and governors. It will be available from the school office as well as through the school's website.

Chair of Governors signature: .....Box.....

Head Teacher signature: .....

Introduction

We aim to ensure that all children attend school regularly and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available. Regular, punctual attendance is valued and positively encouraged for all of our pupils.

We believe that, through attending school every day on time, children and young people will get the best possible start in life.

Aims

- To improve the overall attendance of children at school.
- To improve children's attainment through good attendance.
- To encourage parents to ensure that children arrive at school on time.
- To make attendance a priority for all those associated with the school, including parents, pupils, teachers and governors.

To achieve these aims for our pupils, we are committed to:

- providing a welcoming, stimulating and safe learning environment
- ensuring all staff to feel happy to come to school to work with pupils, developing them to their full potential
- having high expectations of our pupils and all staff
- offering a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum
- recognising and celebrating achievements in all areas of school life
- providing equal access to all aspects of the curriculum and school life
- providing high-quality teaching using a variety of teaching strategies
- providing a range of resources to support and challenge learning effectively
- giving pupils experiences that will develop their spiritual, moral and cultural understanding
- offering support, guidance and training for all those who teach and work with our children
- fostering and maintaining links with our wider community.

Legislative framework

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (section 444) to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the education authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education that is suitable for their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

Expected levels of attendance

Attending school regularly and on time has a positive impact on learning, progress and therefore the life chances of pupils. Research shows that attendance and punctuality are important factors in school success.

At Westoe Crown Primary School we expect all children to achieve attendance that is at least 96%.

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Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:

- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance using agreed codes – see appendix 1.
- Follow-up support if needed.

Absence

If a child is absent from school, parents should contact the school (before 9.15am) on the first day of absence to inform the school of the reason for absence. Parents are required to maintain daily contact with the school throughout the absence.

At 9.30am, school registers are checked for any absences where there has been no contact by parents and reason given.

School staff will send a text message asking parents to contact school. If there is no phone call into school, staff will contact parents by telephone to ascertain a reason for the child's absence from school. If no reason for absence has been established on the second day, the emergency contact number, provided by parents, will be called or a home visit carried out.

Illness

Not all illness requires an absence from school. For minor childhood ailments, we would not expect children to be absent. However, when a parent makes the assessment that their child is unfit for school, they should follow the absence process above.

It is a school's decision whether to accept the reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases, a parent's explanation of their child's illness can be accepted without question or concern. In circumstances where there are concerns about a child's attendance or reason for absence, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested.

The school will challenge parents' statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance.

The types of scenarios where medical evidence may be requested include:

- Attendance is less than 90%
- There are frequent one-day absences due to reported illness.
- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated.

- Where there is a particular medical problem, the school may need evidence in order to seek additional support/provide support.

Medical appointments

Parents should avoid making routine medical appointments and dental appointments during the school day. In the majority of cases, appointments can be made outside of the school day/during the school holidays.

Where appointments have to be taken during the school day, only the time for the appointment and travel will be classed as an authorised absence. Pupils are expected to return to school for the remainder of the day/attend school prior to the appointment.

Parents are required to provide a copy of the appointment letter or card before the day of the appointment.

Attendance monitoring

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions.

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations.

Every half day of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence can be given only when the Head Teacher has either approved in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised.

Attendance data is monitored weekly by the Child & Family Wellbeing Officer and monthly meetings are held with the Head Teacher, and Deputy Head Teacher, to discuss pupils with less than 90% attendance. Parents will be contacted, by letter, to address attendance issues and invited in to school to discuss matters further; support will be offered where appropriate. If attendance does not improve over time, parents will be notified that further absences will be marked as unauthorised, unless medical evidence is provided.

If the pupil has recorded at least 10 sessions (5 school days which do not need to be consecutive) of unauthorised absence in the most recent 10 school weeks, 50 days then a Penalty Notice will be considered.

Good attendance is recognised and rewarded. Pupils with 100% attendance (throughout one term) will be awarded with a certificate during the end of term assembly.

Other reasons for absences

Religious observance

The school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance. It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body. However, parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent. Religious bodies may be contacted to verify these occasions.

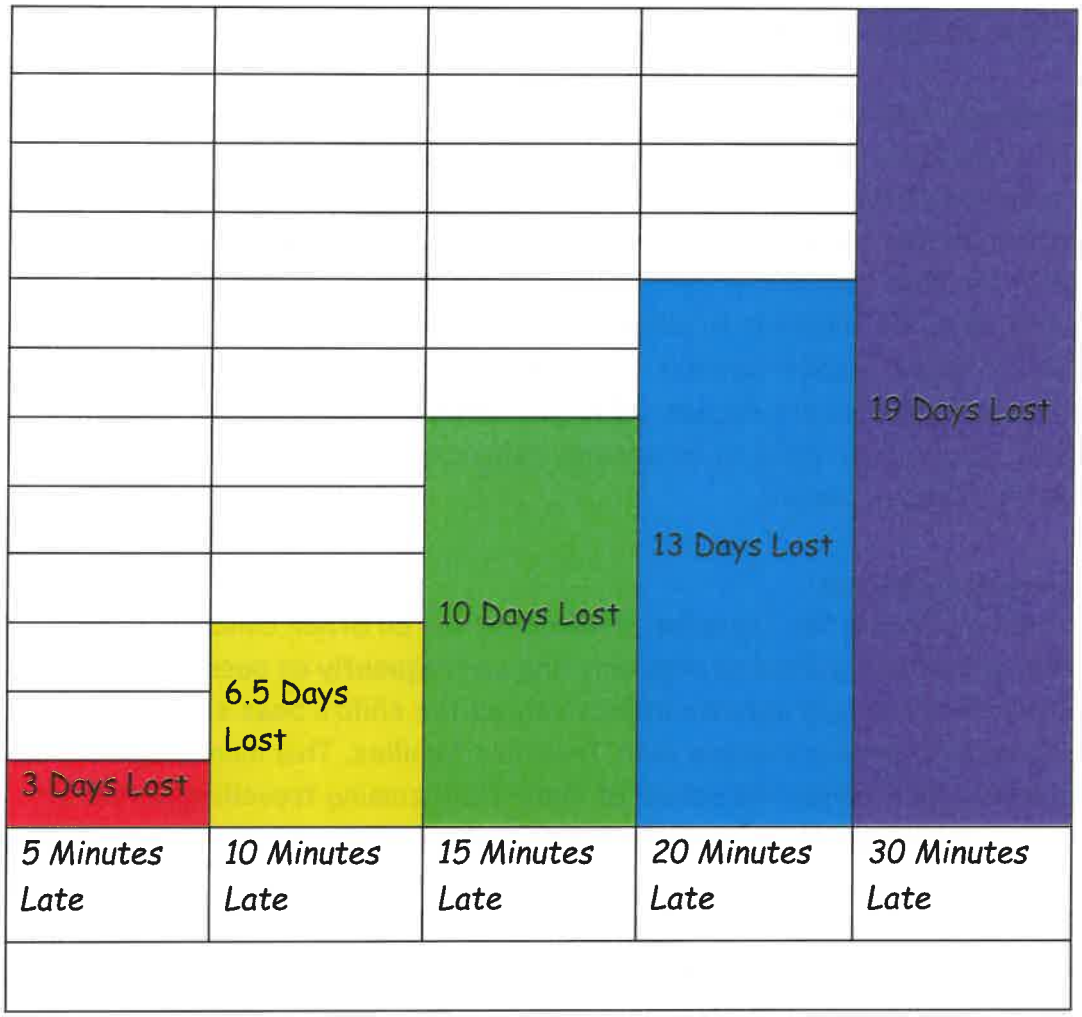
Traveller absence

The school's aim for Traveller children, as for all other children, is that they will attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.
The school can only operate effectively as the child's base school if it is engaged in ongoing dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen, and inform the school regarding proposed return dates.
The school will authorise absence of Traveller children if their parents are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place and have indicated that they intend to return.
Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known not to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

Punctuality

It is important that pupils are punctual so that they do not miss out on the beginning of each school day. Children must attend on time to be given a present mark for the session.

If a pupil arrives late to school every day, their learning begins to suffer. Below is a graph showing how being late to school every day over a school year adds up to lost learning time.



We ask parents to ensure that their children are in school, through their classroom door, for 8.50am.

Children arriving after 8.55am will be marked in the register as 'L' (late for school) and have to report to the school office, with their parent who will be required to complete a late registration form. Lateness can be embarrassing for the child, can also encourage absence and also disrupt lessons.

If a pupil arrives after the register closes (9.20am), this will be classed as an unauthorised absence (code U as per Department for Education compulsory attendance codes).

Unauthorised absences are referred to the Local Authority for further action.

The registers are monitored daily to identify pupils who are arriving late. Regular late arrival for school will be challenged as not acceptable. Where children have persistent lateness problems, parents will be invited into school to address the concerns and discuss any issues. Unresolved persistent lateness will be referred to the Local Authority for further action.

Use of attendance data

All schools must provide their attendance data to the Department for Education. Most schools use their management information systems to send their data via school census. The figures returned are then published by the Department for Education as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

We collect, use and store attendance information about our pupils and may receive information about you from your previous school. The information we keep regarding attendance includes name, contact details, attendance records, late records and any relevant medical information.

To be reviewed: Spring 2026

Appendix 1
ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT dual registration)	Approved education activity
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
C1	Authorised regulated performance	Authorised absence
C2	Temporary reduced timetable	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved education activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J1	Interview	Authorised absence
K	Alternative provision (LA arranged)	Authorised absence
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved education activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved education activity
W	Work experience	Approved education activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Attendance not required
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Attendance not required
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Attendance not required
Y4	Unable to attend due to whole school being closed	Attendance not required
Y5	Unable to attend due as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Attendance not required
Y6	Absent in accordance with public health guidance or Law	Attendance not required
Y7	Unable to attend because of other unavoidable Cause	Attendance not required
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix 2

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Name	Role	Responsibilities
Joanne Hobbs	School governor	Ensure compliance with relevant legislation (e.g. pupil registration, attendance registers) Reviewing school attendance Agreeing and reviewing school policy
Stephanie Proctor	Head Teacher	Overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance Compliance with relevant legislation Data analysis and strategic plan for attendance. Implementing school policy and leading on whole school approach. Authorising/unauthorising absences Leave of absence request Line management Overview of clear and escalating interventions Evaluation of interventions. Promoting school attendance. Responsibility for links with the LA statutory team. Attendance at attendance panels
Class teachers	Class teachers	Marking registers Promoting importance of regular school's attendance Providing early warning of attendance concerns Positive role modeling Following policy and procedures consistently.
Lesley Fearon	Child & Family Wellbeing Officer	Maintaining registers First day calling/text messages Identifying children whose absence needs further follow-up action in line with the school absence procedure. Late arrivals Process for clearing registers Administration of school attendance letters, leave of absence letters etc. Producing attendance reports