

## Attendance Policy

To report the absence from school please contact 0114 248 5221 before 8:30 on the morning. Alternatively you can email [westfieldattendance@westfield-admin.co.uk](mailto:westfieldattendance@westfield-admin.co.uk)

The Attendance Manager for Westfield School is Mrs P Birkwood

### **Introduction**

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

### **Why regular attendance is so important:**

#### **Learning:-**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

#### **Safeguarding:-**

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

Attendance  
Behaviour Management  
Health and Safety  
Access to the Curriculum  
Anti - bullying

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis must be considered as a safeguarding matter.

### **Promoting regular attendance:**

It is the responsibility of the parent or carer to ensure a child's attendance at school. We will always work with parents and carers to support the attendance of a student.

### **To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Report to you at least half-termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments; this information is available any time through the school's parent portal website
- Celebrate good attendance;
- Reward good or improving attendance through form certificates.

### **The Law relating to attendance**

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:-*

*(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'*

### **The Law relating to safeguarding**

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.

### **Understanding the types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school with an evidenced reason for example, illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which are not evidenced and for which no "leave of absence" has been granted by the school. Unauthorised absence can lead to issuing of fixed penalty notices and/or prosecution.

Unauthorised absence includes (but not limited to):

- None evidenced illness absences where a child is PA or close to.
- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time.

Please remember it is the responsibility of parents or carers to ensure the attendance of a child. Any child may be off school because they are ill; sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

A student is classified as a 'persistent absentee' if they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent/carers fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school will monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

All our PA students and their parents participate in an action plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support.

### **Absence Procedures:**

#### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 8:30 on 0114 248 5221 or email [westfieldattendance@westfield-admin.co.uk](mailto:westfieldattendance@westfield-admin.co.uk)
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Medical evidence is required for any absences where a child is PA or close to.

#### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Manager.

## **Children Missing from Education**

The Attendance Manager is the nominated member of school staff to liaise with the Children and Young People's Directorate Children Missing from Education Team. Students who cannot be located will be considered missing. The Children Missing from Education Team will be informed and will pursue the matter in accordance with Local Authority procedures.

## **Children Looked After**

Mr S Adams, Assistant Headteacher who liaises with the Children and Young People's Directorate Children Looked After Team. Looked After Children will be set up as a discrete attendance group on the school motoring system and individual attendance checked each half term.

The Attendance Manager has daily telephone contact with Welfare Call regarding the attendance of Looked After Children.

## **Parent and Carers Telephone Numbers**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number.

## **The School Attendance Manager:**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. We will always try to resolve the attendance issues by agreement, however if efforts to improve the child's attendance fail and unauthorised absences persist, sanctions such as fixed Penalty Notices and or prosecutions will have to be pursued.

## **Punctuality:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. At Westfield school there is no form period at the start of the day or immediately after lunch time. Therefore, if students are late for school then they are late for learning. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons can cause embarrassment that can also encourage absence.

## **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at **8:25am** and we expect your child to be in lesson at that time.

Registers are marked by **8:30am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a penalty notice if the problem persists.

If your child is registered late twice or more in one week, you will be contacted and your child will receive a detention or time in the Reflection Room. Please refer to the Climate for learning policy for the details on school sanctions.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Attendance Manager to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

## **Request for leave of absences**

Headteachers are only allowed to grant leave of absence to students in exceptional circumstances. Department for Education guidelines are clear that taking term-time holidays will not be considered as an exceptional circumstance. If leave of absences is declined by the school yet parents or carers still remove their child then this would be classed as unauthorised absence for which a fixed penalty notice and/or prosecution could be pursued. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually. Parents/carers who do not request term time leave and take their child on 'unauthorised leave', could be liable for a fixed penalty notice and/or prosecution and even potentially lose their place at their school.

Requests for exceptional term time leave must be made at least 20 school days in advance of any arrangement being made. This will allow sufficient time for the request to be considered by the school. The request must be made in writing (letter or email) by the parent/carer using Request for Exceptional Leave form. A copy of this form is attached to this policy or can be downloaded from the school website. One form per child per request should be completed. All schools within the Westfield family have the same leave of absence policy.