



## **WCA Attendance Policy**

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## Attendance Team

Attendance is everyone's responsibility, but key staff in school supporting this crucial area are:

Claire Franklin	Lead DSL/Strategic Lead for	<a href="mailto:Staffcxf@westcoventryacademy.org">Staffcxf@westcoventryacademy.org</a>
Jody Watson	Attendance Officer	<a href="mailto:Staffjoh@westcoventryacademy.org">Staffjoh@westcoventryacademy.org</a>

## Attendance Matters

### Our Schools Attendance Target

**95%**

We ask students to aim to achieve at least 96% attendance. We recognise that for some this may be challenging, therefore we will provide additional support to students and their families to encourage excellent attendance

### The Main Principles

There is a direct link between academic attainment and attendance at school. West Coventry Academy is therefore committed to working with parents and carers to ensure all students achieve as high a level of attendance as possible. Students are set a target of achieving at least 95% attendance.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure children of compulsory school age attend school regularly. Students should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Attendance during one school year	Equals the number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent (100% equals 39 weeks)	Which means this number of lessons missed
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons

Schools have a duty of law to refer any absence of 5 days or more where they have been unable to contact the parent/carer/child or have general concerns about the absence to the Local Authority.

Schools are required to take a register twice a day (am and pm), and this shows whether a student is present, engaged in an approved off-site education activity, or absent. If a student of compulsory school age is absent, every half day absence from school must be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. The decision lies with the school as to whether the absence will be authorised. For this reason, information about the cause of each absence is always required.



## Absence

Absence can only be authorised by the Headteacher, within the boundaries set by The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

**Headteachers may not authorise leave during term time except where the circumstances are exceptional.**

Please do remember that parental/carer illness, going shopping, visiting family, truancy, alleged bullying (speak to school immediately to resolve issues), family holidays are not acceptable reasons for absence. All of these will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Arriving after registration has closed will also result in an authorised absence being recorded.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always appropriate or in the child's best interests to miss school for such emergencies which are being dealt with by adults. Being at school with support from staff and peers can provide children with a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

**It is a parents legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education. Failing to send your child to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence.**

## Reporting Absence

If your child is going to be absent from school, it is important that the school is made aware.

### Reporting Same Day Illness

Parents are legally obliged to ensure that their child attends school for each session during the prescribed school days of the academic year, unless there is illness or some other acceptable reason for absence. Parents are asked to inform the school office by **9.00 am** on the first (and every subsequent) day of absence due to illness. It is crucial that parents adhere to this procedure to ensure that all pupils are safe and their whereabouts accounted for.

- All absences **must** be reported via the school absence email [wcastudentabsence@westcoventryacademy.org](mailto:wcastudentabsence@westcoventryacademy.org)
- The Attendance Officer will inform parents of their child's absence if the School has not received any notification on the day of absence. WCA use a daily text and email service to inform parents of absences where no explanation has been received. If after their return, there is no explanation for the absence, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and further sanctions by the School may be applied.
- Where a pupil's absence exceeds five days or causes serious concern, the School will follow Coventry Safeguarding or Children missing in Education procedures.

### Reporting Future Absence For Appointments

All appointments, such as dentist and doctors, should be made for outside of school hours where possible.

Where it is necessary to attend an appointment during the school day parents'/carers should alert the school by telephone or by letter.



Students are expected to attend on the day of an appointment for as much of the day as possible. For the absence to be authorised, evidence of the appointment must be given to school by way of an appointment card or letter.

### **Requesting Leave in Term Time**

Parents/carers should make every effort to avoid taking students out of education for holidays or other extended leave during term time. This leave will only be authorised in exceptional, rare and one-off circumstances. Family holidays will not be authorised.

Any request needs to be made in writing giving as much notice as possible, 4 weeks as a minimum. Please address any such requests to the Headteacher, either in a letter or an email to [info@westcoventryacademy.org](mailto:info@westcoventryacademy.org)

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the school cannot or has not given permission). Depending on circumstances, such cases can result in prosecution under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

If a leave of absence is not authorised by the Headteacher, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notices will be issued by post to the home address. The Penalty Notice is:

- £60 if paid in full within 21 days
- £120 if paid in full after 21 days but within 28 days

### **Religious Observance**

We recognise that students of certain faiths may need to participate in religious observance when the day falls in term time. The school will issue a day authorised absence in these cases.

We ask that parents/carers notify the academy in writing in advance where a days religious observance is required. Please provide a letter or send an email to [info@westcoventryacademy.org](mailto:info@westcoventryacademy.org)

### **Children Missing in Education (CME)**

As a school, we are concerned about any child who may be missing education because in addition to their educational development, their safety and wellbeing may be at risk.

The Coventry City Council Children CME team works with schools in support of children who are absent from school and their whereabouts unknown, This might be

- A child who is not at their last known address and
- Has 5 or more days of continuous absence without explanation, or
- Has left school suddenly and their destination is unknown. The policy does not cover those children not receiving education due to a family not taking up an offer of a school place from the Schools Admissions Service.



## Home Education – Parents/Carers Role

Parents/carers have a responsibility to ensure that their children of school age are receiving efficient full-time education. Some parents/carers may elect to home educate their children and may withdraw them from school at any time to do so. This is unless they are subject to an attendance order. Where a parent/carer notifies the school in writing of their intention to home educate, the school will ensure parents/carers are fully aware of their legal responsibilities in educating their child. School will then inform the local authority following their procedures, before the deleting the child from its admission register.

## Registration and Punctuality

For safeguarding purposes, a register is taken at the start of the school day and at the start of the afternoon session. These two registers make up a students overall attendance percentage.

### Morning Registration:

A registration system is in place to record attendance, lateness and absences.

- Each school day is split into two sessions, morning and afternoon, which are recorded in Morning Registration/Tutor and Period 4. Punctual attendance at both is compulsory.
- When a pupil fails to attend school for one or more sessions this will be recorded as an absence. Absences will be shown as authorised or unauthorised. The School determines whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised (see below).
- Morning registration for all pupils is at **8.40 am** each day in Period 1; period 4 commences at **1.15 pm**
- Any pupil arriving after **9:00 am** will be required to sign in at Reception and will receive a late slip with the number of minutes late recorded.
- Failure to follow these procedures for registering will result in an unauthorised absence being recorded.
- When students are unaccounted for, the School will send a text home to ensure all absences are explained.

### Lesson Registration:

- Pupils will be registered by subject staff in each lesson during the day.

## Monitoring Attendance

Students attendance is regularly reviewed and the following actions could happen to support students' attendance.



## Monitoring Attendance (KS3 and KS4) – Target for all students is 95% or above

Student's attendance will be regularly reviewed, and the following actions could happen to support student's attendance.

(Students who are categorised as vulnerable and have attendance concerns will be targeted first at all stages.)

At all stages we want to work with Parents/Carers to support their child's attendance. The below actions work as a **guide** only and different support methods may be more suitable for some students.

### Stage 1 Attendance Concern (Below 95%)

Stage 1 may be initiated if a student's attendance is below 95%

- Communication with student and parents/carers about attendance concerns, this could be in the form of a letter (Letter 1), phone conversation or meeting in person.
- Tutor/Pastoral Leader/Attendance Officer/Trusted adult may carry out the 3 Houses activity to explore the reasons for absence.

### Stage 2 Attendance Concern

Stage 2 may be initiated if a student has unauthorised absences and no reason from Parents/Carers has been given.

- Attendance Team will make formal contact with parents i.e. by letter (Letter 2) or parental meeting.
- A home visit may be carried out.
- A School Attendance Improvement Plan may be completed with the student.
- A referral to the schools Family Support Worker may be made.
- Medical verification may be requested for any illness absence.

### Stage Attendance Concern 3

Stage 3 may be initiated if a student has 10 or more unauthorised absences and attendance has not improved following Stage 2.

- Formal Warning Notice issued by the school via post/email. (Letter 3)
- Home visits may be carried out by the Attendance Team/Pastoral Leader/Family Support Worker.
- A referral to ESNAAP (Extended School's Non Attendance Advisory Panel) may be made.
- The student may be discussed with the Early Help Coordinator to explore the need for external support.
- School may liaise with the Local Authority and target dates may be set, which could lead to a penalty notice issued by Coventry City Council, if there are further unauthorised absences. See below for further details



At all stages we want to work with parents/carers to support their child's attendance. The stages of support work as a guide only and different methods of support may be more suitable for some students.

Intervention and support is individualised, but may involve pastoral support, letters to parents, meetings with parents, home visits, referrals to other agencies or internal support.

## **Local Authority (LA) / Agency Referral**

If a student has at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in total and all actions have been followed, the school will seek advice from the Attendance & Inclusion Team at Coventry City Council regarding improving attendance. . If a student is persistently absent due to 'Emotionally Based School Avoidance' reasons, please refer to the section below. This section may need to be personalised with the above as an example.

### **Penalty Notice for Irregular Attendance**

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the school cannot or has not given permission). Depending on circumstances, such cases can result in prosecution under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Attendance and Inclusion Team will first issue a 20 day Monitoring Period informing parent/s that if their child has any unauthorised absence during this set period, a Penalty Notice will be issued.

If there has been any unauthorised absences in the monitoring period, A Penalty Notice is issued.

Penalty Notices will be issued by post to the home address. The Penalty Notice is:

- £60 if paid in full within 21 days
- £120 if paid in full after 21 days but within 28 days

If not fully paid within 28 days and there is no reason to withdraw the Notice, the Local Authority has no option but to prosecute a parent in the Magistrates' Court for failing to ensure regular school attendance. A fine of up to £2,500 or a community penalty could be imposed together with a Parenting Order.

## **Emotionally Based School Avoidance**

Where parents/carers are working with school to improve a student's attendance, but there are barriers related to anxiety, challenging emotions and thoughts and self-care, the school will refer to appropriate agencies to gain wider support where appropriate.

The school will only progress through the stages where parents/carers are not engaging and making every effort to improve their child's attendance.