



# Wimbledon College

## Attendance Policy

Agreed by the Governing Body on 16.10.24

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## Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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:

- [The Education Acts 1996 and 2002](#)
- [The Children Act 1989](#)
- [The Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#)
- [The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Sentencing Act 2020](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#) ([legislation.gov.uk](http://legislation.gov.uk))
- [The Education \(Information about Individual Pupils\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

## Roles and responsibilities

### The Governing Body

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### 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 pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary

### The Designated Senior Leaders responsible for attendance

The designated senior leaders are responsible for:

- Leading attendance across their lines
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leaders responsible for attendance are:

- Deputy Head Lower Line
- Deputy Head Higher Line
- Head of Sixth Form

### Heads of Line

The Head of Line is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Deputy Head (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

## Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information on the school's MIS. The expectation is that class registers are completed within the first 10 minutes of each period.

## Pastoral Support Staff

Pastoral Support staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Maintain and update attendance records to ensure they are accurate
- Assist the Head of Line with communication to parents

## Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Contact the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return. This can be done by phone, email or via the Arbor Parent Portal.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

## Pupils

Pupils in Years 7 to 11 must arrive in school by 8.30am on each school day. Sixth Form pupils are expected to attend every timetabled session on time.

## Recording attendance

### Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. The attendance register is updated from the **class registers** for each subject period and tutor period. The class register will be taken at the start of every period of each school day. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Late
- Absent

Any amendment to the attendance register on Arbor will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry using the appropriate DFE code (see appendix 1)
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not

## Attendance Policy

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

### Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by contacting the Pastoral Support Assistant of their son's line (see also **Attendance Monitoring**).

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 3 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 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. In each instance, the Pastoral Support Assistant must be notified.

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 (see section 5)

### Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- **Before the register has closed** will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- **After the register has closed (9:00am)** will be marked as **absent**. In accordance with the 'Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006', the mark will be code U, that shows that the pupil is on site, but this will **not count** as a present mark and it **will mean they have an unauthorised absence**.

Sanctions for lateness

Pupils who arrive late to school (after **8.25am**)

- 1<sup>st</sup> late will result in pupil having to sign in with Pastoral Support Assistant before 8.10 am the next day that the pupil attends school.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> late in a week will result in an automatic 30 minute School Detention and another 8.10 am sign in on the next day that the pupil attends school.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> late in a week will result in a Saturday sign in. Pupils are required to arrive at school at 8.30am on Saturday morning and sign in with Senior member of staff on duty.

Pupils who arrive after the register has closed (9:00am):

- 1<sup>st</sup> occasion in a week will result in a Saturday sign in
- 2<sup>nd</sup> occasion in a week will result in a Saturday Detention

### Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the Educational Welfare Service or the police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

### Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via half termly report cards.

### Authorised and unauthorised absence

#### Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. All requests should use the form available online on the school website:

<https://www.wimbledoncollege.org.uk/parents/attendance-and-punctuality>

(See Appendix 2)

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 6 weeks before the absence. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see section RECORDING ATTENDANCE 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/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

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- 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

### **Suspension from school**

Any pupil who has been suspended from school, and provision arranged, does not attend the provision then this shall be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may result in further action taken by the school, please see also the penalty notice section.

### **Part-time Timetables**

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. (Working Together to Improve School Attendance).

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time, either at school or alternative provision.

There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised and code in the register as a C, which is an authorised absence.

### **Ten days' unauthorised absence**

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing education (CME). The Education Welfare Officer will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Parents are asked to help us by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

### **Pupils who cannot attend school because of health needs**

The school attendance officer will work together with the local authority and other relevant professionals to ensure any child who is going to be absent for longer than 15 days due to medical reasons either consecutively or cumulatively, will have access to relevant and appropriate education. This includes Public Exam provision and the education of siblings where the family have had to travel and stay away from the home for medical reasons.

### Children Missing from Education (CME)

If a pupil moves too far from Wimbledon College to attend the school/moves out of the area/abroad the parents must complete a school leavers form, available from the school office. This will provide the pupil's new home address, potentially their new school name and contact details and contact information for their parents/carers. If no/insufficient detail is provided to the school, the pupil will be referred to the Local Authority as a Child Missing from Education and the Local Authority will need to make appropriate checks.

### Legal sanctions

The Local authority (on behalf of the school) can fine/prosecute parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. After 2 fines, the next option is prosecution.

If issued with a fine, the Penalty is £160 per parent per child if paid within 28 days reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Any subsequent fine will be £160 with no option to pay a reduced figure and any further enforcement action will be via prosecution under s4441/4441a Education Act 1996.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling 10-week period
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where a pupil is suspended or excluded and 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.

## Attendance monitoring

### Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

## Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

## Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

## 8. Working with Parents

Building respectful relationships with families and working in collaboration is essential to ensuring the best outcomes for pupils. We require all parents to actively support the work of the school, including promoting attendance and engagement. The school is committed to ensuring that systems and processes are in place with regards to promoting attendance and would encourage parents to make contact if they have concerns about their child.

It is pertinent that school and parents work together with a shared plan and outcomes when supporting a pupil's attendance and wellbeing. If despite persistent attempts to work with parents, there continues to be a lack of engagement, then legal procedures may be followed to secure engagement and school attendance.

### Attendance Contracts

An Attendance Contract is a formal written agreement with the School, Parent(s), Pupil(s), and the School's Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

The aim is to offer support by listening to the reasons for absence and difficulties that prevent regular school attendance during a meeting with the pupil, parent(s), school staff and the EWO.

The purpose of the meeting is to set out an action plan to address the poor school attendance of the pupil with realistic achievable targets to be made within a reasonable time scale. (See Appendix 3 for a sample Attendance Contract)

### **9. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum 2 years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

### **10. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

### Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance. A list of all the codes available can be accessed [via this link](#)

Code	Definition
	<i>Attending the school</i>
/	Present (am) Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm) Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival Pupil arrives late before register has closed ( <i>within 30 minutes of the register opening</i> ). If a pupil arrives after 30 minutes a U code will be entered
	<i>Attending a place other than school</i>
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Attending an educational visit or trip <b>supervised</b> by the school
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
W	Attending work experience
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
D	Dual registered at another school
	<i>Authorised absence</i>
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
	<i>Unauthorised absence</i>
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed

## Appendix 2: Absence Request Form

 <b style="font-size: 1.2em;">Wimbledon College</b>	<b style="font-size: 1.2em;">Absence Request Form</b> (Exceptional Circumstances Only)
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IMPORTANT: Before completing this form please read the 'Notes' overleaf carefully. These clearly explain the circumstances under which an absence from School can be considered. This form should be completed by a parent with whom the child(ren) lives.

### TO THE HEAD TEACHER

I wish to apply to have an absence authorised for:

Pupil name(s)		Year(s)	
---------------	--	---------	--

Period Absent

From		To	
Number of school days that will be missed			

Please explain the reason for the absence (consider that the school will use this to determine whether the 'exceptional circumstances' criteria is met. Please also include the names of parents who will be travelling with the pupil(s))

You are asked to sign this request to confirm that the information provided above is correct, and that you have read the information contained in the **Notes to Parents** overleaf.

<i>Name of parent completing this form</i>	<i>Signed</i>	<i>Date</i>

## NOTES TO PARENTS/CARERS

- Schools are only allowed by law, to authorise non-medical absences if requested in advance by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides.
- A school can only authorise such a request if they are satisfied that there are “exceptional circumstances” which apply.
- Parents should ensure that they know whether the absence will be authorised or not before they go away as an unauthorised absence will likely result in a penalty notice or court summons being issued to the parent for each pupil affected. **It is therefore recommended that this completed form is sent into the school at least three school weeks before the intended absence.**

### WARNING TO PARENTS

If this request is unauthorised by the school, a penalty notice may be issued by the Local Authority.

Parents should note that only one penalty notice per parent per child will normally be issued within a two-year period. If there is a second occasion within the two year period where a penalty notice would have been issued then court proceedings may follow.

### AVOIDABLE ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

THE FACTS	THE LAW
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School aged pupils are expected to attend punctually on the 190 days that the school is open.</li> <li>• Whilst there are a number of unavoidable reasons why a pupil might be away from school (illness, medical appointments, exclusions etc.), the legislation is clear that any avoidable absence may only be authorised by a school if there are exceptional circumstances.</li> </ul> <p><b>WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research suggests that pupils who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the pupil is studying for final year examinations.</li> <li>• Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school.</li> <li>• If the school is unable to authorise the absence and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as <b>unauthorised absence</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The law allows schools to consider individual requests to authorise a future avoidable absence.</li> <li>• However, before the school can authorise any such requests, they must satisfy themselves that there are exceptional circumstances which justify such a decision.</li> <li>• It is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information/evidence in order to establish this fact.</li> <li>• The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the pupil normally resides</li> <li>• If a pupil then stays away from school for more than the authorised period, this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</li> <li>• If the pupil is away from school for a total of four weeks or more, the school may have the option to take the child off roll subject to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.</li> <li>• In the case of unexpected extended absence, it is advisable that the parent fully informs the school as to the reasons.</li> <li>• If a pupil is removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</li> </ul>

Appendix 3: Attendance Contract

Pupil Name	
DOB / Year group	
Parent/carer 1 full name	
Parent/Carer 2 full name	
Date of Meeting	
Attendance during last 12 weeks	
Sessions of unauthorised absence	
Number of late marks	
Concerns	
Success Criteria	
Strategies that work well	
Targets	
Timescale	
Review	

## Attendance Policy

<i>This is a voluntary agreement where all parties agree to work together to follow the agreed plan to support the pupil attend school regularly and punctually.</i>			
<i>I agree to work together with school and the local authority to follow the agreed plan</i>			
(Pupil) Signed:		Date	
(Parent) Signed:		Date	
(Parent) Signed:		Date	
<i>I agree to provide the above support to the parent(s) for the purpose of complying with the plan.</i>			
(School) Signed:		Date	
<i>I agree to provide the above support to the parent(s) for the purpose of complying with the plan.</i>			
(Lead professional/ EWO) Signed:		Date	