



West Kirby Grammar School

School Attendance Policy

1. Rationale

Regular attendance and excellent punctuality are the foundations for academic achievement and personal development. They establish a responsible attitude towards the opportunities available at school and underpin the basis for the world of work. Attendance and punctuality are strongly linked to students' well-being and safety.

2. Guiding Principles

We are committed to ensuring that all students benefit from the opportunities available at West Kirby Grammar School. Our expectation is that students arrive on time and attend regularly; we will actively promote this ethos throughout the school community and encourage our students to achieve this. Where this expectation is not met we will identify and address the barriers that prevent this.

3. Responsibilities

The Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that registered students of school age attend school regularly and punctually and that they receive an education suitable for their aptitude and ability.

The school have a legal responsibility for maintaining school registers and taking the register twice a day. The school also has a responsibility for reporting absence to the Local Authority. We also have safeguarding responsibility and duty of care to all our students.

Student responsibilities – we encourage our students to become independent young people including taking responsibility for their attendance and punctuality.

4. Attendance

- We will celebrate and reward students who achieve our expectations of a high level of attendance and those who have shown sustained improvement
- Tutors will share attendance information with students during designated tutor periods focusing on the link between attendance and achievement
- Heads of Year will promote high attendance and punctuality through assemblies; individual meetings with students; groups of students, always reinforcing the link between attendance and achievement
- The school will communicate attendance matters to parents via text; telephone; email; letter and through the school website.

5. Absence from school

There are only two categories of absence from school:

Authorised – approved

Unauthorised – not approved

Only the Headteacher (or their delegate) can approve an absence from school. That is the law.

Absence will be recorded using the code recommended by the Department for Education Guidance on School Attendance.

Authorised (approved) absence – examples of authorised absence that may be approved:-

- Leave of absence - for bereavement, funeral, wedding
- Medical absence for appointments – at Hospital or Orthodontic appointments. (Non-urgent routine check-up appointments should be made for after 3.40pm or during the school holidays.) Students are expected to be absent for the minimal amount of time and not absent for the whole day.
- Illness
- Religious observance
- University visits – up to three days will be authorised for students in Years 12 & 13 to attend university open days.
- Interviews
- Dance or music exams
- Licensed Productions
- If a student is excluded from school for a behaviour related incident, this is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised (not approved) absence – examples of absence that will not be approved

- Absence due to birthday, shopping for uniform, looking after family members.
- Holiday in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances agreed to by the Headteacher – in line with changes to the law implemented in 2013.
- Late arrival to school after the register has closed has to be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Any request for absence should be made using a Leave of Absence Request form – see Appendix 2.

All absence – authorised and unauthorised – will be analysed and subject to challenge to ensure that any concern regarding frequency, pattern or validity is acted upon swiftly.

Parents/Carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence and each day thereafter informing the school of the reason for absence and the expected date of return to school.

6. How our policy works in practice Punctuality

- Students who arrive late to registration are recorded as L (late before registration closes.) Registration takes place in Tutor time between 8.50am and 9.10am. Students should be in school for the start of Registration at 8.50am. Period 1 begins at 9.10 am. Frequent late arrival will be challenged by the Pastoral/Attendance Team and letters sent to parents. Persistent late arrival will result in parents and students being asked to attend a meeting with the Pastoral/Attendance Team.
- A student arriving after the register has closed at 9.30am, may have absence recorded as U (unauthorised late arrival.) Ten unauthorised sessions over a 10 week period can result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.
- We operate a late arrivals/check in desk at Reception. Students will be challenged about the reason for their late arrival; this is followed up with daily contact to parents whenever possible.

Medical appointments

- We monitor the amount of lessons missed due to medical appointments carefully.
- We acknowledge that hospital and specialist clinic appointments, including orthodontic and on-going dental treatment may require a student having time out of school. Our expectation is that the minimum amount of learning is lost. We will seek an explanation from students and parents where a whole day is missed for this reason. Proof of unavoidable medical appointments in school time must be provided for the school.
- Routine, non-urgent appointments must be made after 3.40pm or during school holiday periods.

Illness

- Students are likely to experience bouts of illness from time to time. Some students will be managing chronic or more serious medical conditions that impact on their attendance. We will support students in these circumstances to ensure they do not miss out on their education.
- When a student is identified as having frequent absence for reasons of minor illness, a meeting will be arranged to discuss this with the Pastoral/Attendance Team.

Holiday absence in term time

- If a parent feels there are exceptional circumstances that support a request for leave of absence in term time; they must put the request in writing using the Leave of Absence Request form
- Each case will be considered individually and the decision communicated to the parents. Governors have adopted a zero tolerance to absence in term time for holidays and agreed

that where parents ignore the policy, cases will be referred to the Local Authority for the issuing of a Penalty Notice (fine.)

Children missing education

- We have a duty to inform the Local Authority of any student who is on the school roll, not in attendance and whose whereabouts we have not been able to establish. We do this through completing a Pupil Tracking Form. This particularly applies to students who move to another authority or country but are not yet in education.

Home education

- Parents have a right to educate their children other than at school. If a parent wishes to withdraw their child from school to pursue this option, this decision must be put in writing to the Headteacher. The school will then complete a form with the students' details and send to the Local Authority.

7. Procedure

Concerns about absence from school and the likely impact on a student's progress will be communicated to both students and parents through our attendance procedures. Please see Appendix 1.

Daily

- ✓ Attendance Officer collates messages left by parents/carers regarding absence and enters correct code in register
- ✓ Tutor takes attendance register and enters present or absent code
- ✓ Class teacher takes register in every lesson
- ✓ Attendance Officer enters late arrival marks in register
- ✓ Attendance Officer activates Schoolcomms to inform parent/carer that student has not arrived at school
- ✓ Attendance Officer updates registers

Weekly

- ✓ Tutor shows attendance of whole Tutor Group and discusses attendance issues with students during designated tutor time particularly below 95% and broken weeks
- ✓ Attendance for all students is monitored by Head of Year for each year group. Particular focus on those students below 95%, those students who have a high number of broken weeks and students who are identified as being part of a vulnerable group ☐ Attendance data shared with attendance team

Half Termly

- ✓ Meetings between Pastoral Team and Attendance Officer regarding interventions with students below 95%, with high number of broken weeks and particular groups of students where no improvement is shown. School Attendance Meetings are set up with students, parents and the Attendance Officer

Termly

- ✓ Standard letters to parents of students with below 95%
- ✓ Standard letters to parents of students with high number of broken weeks
- ✓ Standard letters to parents of students with 8 or more late arrivals

- ✓ School attendance meetings with parents as agreed
- ✓ Report for Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team

School Attendance Meetings with parents follow a staged process with the aim being to investigate the reasons for low level of attendance and to look at what is needed to secure and sustain an improvement. Formal procedures are implemented when this intervention does not bring about change. Please see Appendix 1.

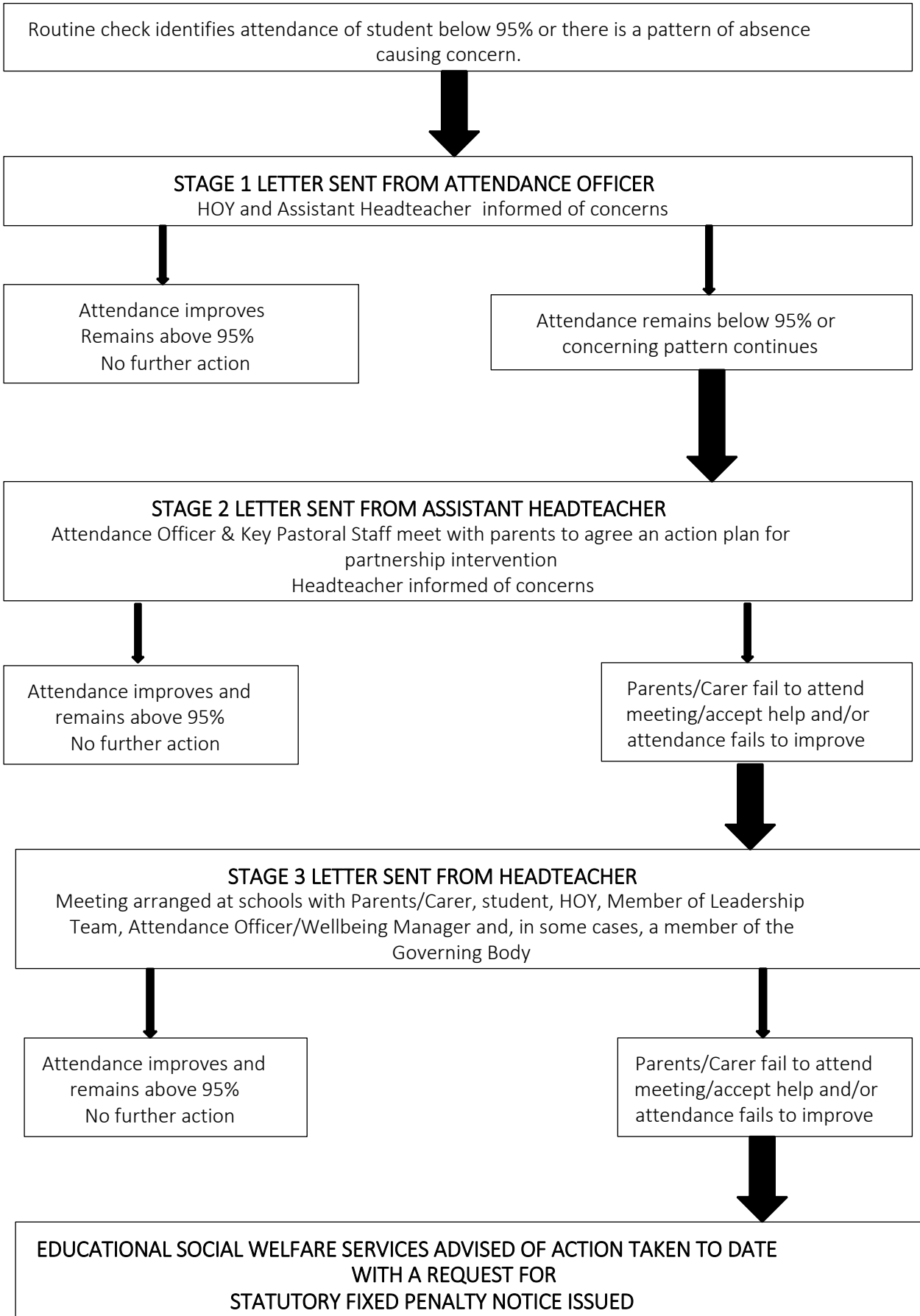
Formal guidance informing this policy

- ❖ Education Act 1996 which states if any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.
- ❖ The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- ❖ Parental responsibility measures – DFE Jan 17 regarding Penalty Notices (Fines) updated March 2018
- ❖ Working Together to Safeguard Children DFE Feb 2017 – keeping children safe.
- ❖ Educating Children with Health Needs – DFE May 2013 – Ensuring children with health needs do not miss out
- ❖ Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions – DFE December 2015
- ❖ Children missing education – DFE September 2016
- ❖ School Attendance Guidance– DFE November 2019
- ❖ Wirral Council local code of conduct with regards to issuing of Penalty Notices

Updated: November 2019

APPENDIX 1

Attendance Procedure





West Kirby Grammar School Leave of Absence Request Form

Parents who take their children on holiday during term time without prior authorisation by the school may be fined under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act.

Name of Student		Form	
Proposed Dates of Absence (Inclusive)	From / / Time (if applicable):	To / / Time (if applicable):	
Reason for Absence			
Information Supporting a Holiday Request <i>i.e. evidence from employer why holiday cannot be taken during school holidays</i>	Reason why this holiday has to be taken in term time: Is this the only family holiday this academic year? Other exceptional circumstances or reasons:		
Department for Education legislation states that authorised absence for holidays can only be granted in exceptional circumstances and parents/carers who remove their child/ward from school in term time may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice			
Information supporting ALL Other Reasons for Absence	<i>Please attach copies of ANY correspondence relating to this request</i>		

This completed form must be submitted to school, not less than one month before the proposed period of absence. The school will be flexible in cases where such notice is clearly not possible. Parents/Carers are strongly advised to seek authorised absence before they book tickets. In any instances, permission will not normally be granted for planned absence lasting more than 10 school days in each academic year.

For Examples of Requests and the School's Likely Decision refer to the School Attendance Policy

Catching up on missed work

If your child/ward misses lessons, it is their responsibility to arrange methods of catching up with their teachers. Teachers are not expected to give individual support on their return to school. Please sign below to show that you have explained this to your child/ward.

Signed	Parent/Carer	Date / /
Signed	On behalf of Headteacher Date / /	Authorised/not authorised Comment:

For Office Use Only <i>Absence sessions to date</i>					% Attendance	Prev. Year	
						Curr. Year	
					Sessions Authorised: Code Applied:		

Website:	Yes
GB Committee:	Full Governing Body
Document Formulated:	November 2017
Date Reviewed by Committee:	December 2019
Reviewed Document Adopted by FGB:	2 December 2019
Next Review Date:	December 2020