



Pupil Attendance Policy

June 2026



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This policy will be reviewed annually
Policy reviewed: June 2026 by A. Thomson
Next review: June 2027 by A. Thomson

I. Introduction and Aims

I.1 This policy applies to WCPS.

I.2 We are committed to promoting a culture and ethos of mutual understanding between pupils, parents and the school which recognises that good attendance is essential to ensure pupils make good academic progress, are well integrated into school life and are able to develop their social and emotional learning. Good attendance is everyone's responsibility, and at WCPS we aim to create a calm, safe and inclusive environment that supports attendance.

I.3 This policy sets out roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders to ensure the school meets its obligations with regards to school attendance in the areas of:

- Promoting good attendance and punctuality
- Building strong relationships and working in partnership with families to understand and remove any barriers there may be to a pupil's attendance
- Registration, procedures for authorising absence and following up on unexplained absence

I.4 Other relevant policies and guidance

- [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [Working together to improve school attendance, DfE 2024](#)
- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025)
- [Children missing education](#), DfE August 2024
- [Merton's Good Practice Guidance for Identifying and Safeguarding Children Missing from Education \(CME\) December 2021](#)
- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [Providing remote education: guidance for schools, DfE 2022 \(updated 2023\)](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools, DfE 2023](#)
- [Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs, DfE 2023](#)



2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Governors

- Governors promote the importance of school attendance via scrutiny of the school's policies and ethos.
- They maintain oversight of the attendance policy, procedures and their implementation as part of their overview of safeguarding and welfare.
- They ensure that the school fulfil the expectations and statutory duties that are related to pupil attendance.

2.2 Head

- The head has overall responsibility for the school fulfilling its legal and statutory duties with respect to pupil registration and following up on children who are absent from education as set out in [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#) and [Children missing education](#) (DfE 2024).
- They delegate responsibility for fulfilling appropriate duties to other members of staff as detailed in section 2.3-2.5 of this policy.
- They ensure that the expectations and procedures set out in this policy are carried out, and that attendance data is reviewed by governors and the Senior Leadership Team as appropriate.

2.3 Senior Management Team responsibilities

- The deputy head (pastoral), designated safeguarding lead, Adel Thomson (ADT@wcps.org.uk) is the school's Senior Attendance Champion and has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.
- The Headteacher maintains oversight and takes delegated responsibility for the process of pupil registration and following up on absence, line management of the attendance secretary and the consideration of absence requests for pupils.
- The Headteacher ensures that the school complies with relevant legislation regarding attendance.
- The designated safeguarding lead maintains oversight of attendance concerns where there may be safeguarding or welfare implications, liaising with external agencies as appropriate and ensuring that statutory attendance reporting duties are fulfilled. The DSL will also ensure that the local authority is provided with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and/or U).
- The Headteacher and deputy head (pastoral)/DSL, encourage all staff to consistently follow their duties and responsibilities with regards to the registration of pupils. Regular reminders about attendance and registration are given and training is organised as required.

2.4 Office Staff (WCPS)

The role of the attendance secretary is as set out in the job description. For the purposes of this policy, this is summarised below:



- To implement a high-quality registration system.
- To manage day to day operations and maintenance of the registration system, including updating all term dates information in the register.
- To ensure that the register uses the appropriate statutory national attendance and absence codes as set out in School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- To assist members of SLT in the encouragement of all staff to consistently follow their duties and responsibilities with regards to the registration of pupils.
- To assist/support staff in the use of the registration protocols and relevant IT systems as appropriate.
- To provide accurate and timely monitoring reports for pastoral staff.
- To communicate effectively with staff and parents on attendance matters, including the provision of information and to help ensure engagement with the policy and process.
- To keep abreast of any new regulations and requirements and communicate these to staff as required, to help ensure that the school complies with relevant legislation regarding attendance.
- To help ensure the school fulfils its duty of care for pupils by reporting and following up on absence in a timely manner.
- To account for every pupil each morning for AM registration and each afternoon for PM registration.
- To alert the DSL to missing pupils and follow the “missing pupil” policy if required.
- To ensure electronic registers are kept securely for 6 years from the date on which the entry was made.
- To ensure a back-up electronic or printed copy of the register is made at least once a month and kept for 6 years after the end of the school year that it relates to.
- To ensure accurate registers are available for inspection.
- To liaise with Class teachers or the Senior Leadership team to follow up on all unexplained absences.

2.5 Class teachers

- The class teacher is responsible for daily registration;
- Class teachers must register their Class every morning at **8:55am**, including late registrations;
- Class teachers must follow up on unexplained absence, with the assistance of the attendance secretary, and should report attendance concerns to the DSL (Senior Attendance Champion) as detailed in this policy;
- Class teachers are responsible for maintaining an accurate register for their Class in conjunction with WCPS administration staff, using the appropriate statutory national attendance and absence codes as set out in School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and should



update the register promptly (within five school days) where N codes remain in the register;

- If the Class teacher has concerns over a child in their Class, they should contact the DSL.
- Class teachers are advised to be in the classroom by 8.40am each day; to maintain a calm, stable, welcoming and safe environment; to be mindful of the busy nature of our pupils' lives in the way notices are read out, registers taken and discussions established.
- Class teachers should liaise with the DSL if they have concerns relating to patterns of absence and must promptly notify the DSL of prolonged or repeated absences, including absences due to health needs, in accordance with Section 6.
- After lunchtime play teachers must complete PM registration for their class promptly, and by 1.45pm;
- For pupils where there are particular safeguarding concerns and the safeguarding team have flagged this with teachers, teachers must immediately alert the safeguarding team about any vulnerable pupil whose absence from a lesson cannot properly be accounted for.

2.6 Parents

- Parents must report their child's absence from school at the earliest opportunity, following the school's procedures;
- Parents must ensure that the school has their contact numbers together with one additional emergency contact number for their child and keep their records up to date via the parent portal;
- Parents must ensure that, wherever possible, they seek to minimise their child's absence from school, for example by arranging appointments outside of the school day;
- Parents must support their child in achieving good attendance and punctuality at school;
- Parents must contact the head teacher as appropriate to request other absence, giving at least two weeks' notice.

2.7 Pupils

- Pupils must follow the procedures set out in this policy on registration, punctuality and signing in and out when permitted.

3. Registration and attendance procedure

3.1 AM registration

3.1.1 Class teachers and attendance secretary should follow the protocol below:

- **8:55am** Morning registration in classrooms with Class teachers. Pupils should be in their classroom by 8.50am.
- **8:55-9:00** Pupils arriving between 8:55am and 9:00am should be marked "L"-late before register closes



- **After 9:00am** Pupils arriving without an acceptable excuse should be marked “U” – late after registration closes indicating that this is an unauthorised absence

3.1.2 Class teachers should look at absence notifications from the school office and enter the correct code into the register, usually:

- Authorised illness = “I”
- Medical/ dental = “M”
- Other authorised circumstances = “C” (authorised open day visit) or “JI” (interviews or admission tests)
- Otherwise, any pupil not present must be marked “N” without exception
- Class teachers should ensure that codes **M**, **I** and **C** are copied over into the PM session if required.

3.1.3 If a parent contacts the Class teacher about any other absence request, this should be passed to the school office or Headteacher as appropriate

3.1.4 Late arrival

- The side gate entrance to the school will be locked from 8.55am.
- Latecomers **MUST** come in via the front gate/door, through the school office and be signed in at reception by their parent or adult (at any time).

3.2 Afternoon registration

- An afternoon registration is taken by each class teacher after lunchtime play.
- Teachers must ensure this is taken promptly, by 1.45pm at the latest.

3.3 Registration in the event of an IT outage:

- Class teachers should, at the start of each year or at any time when the register has changed print paper copies of their register. This paper copy should be completed and handed to the attendance secretary in the case of IT outage.
- Staff should also be aware of how to complete a register on a mobile device (accessing SIM via their web browser) and should use this method should they face an issue with their classroom computer.
- In the case where a Class teacher is unable to carry out registration by any of the methods described above, they should contact the school office.

4. Pupils departing the site for medical appointments or due to illness

- WCPS pupils must report to reception before departing the site with a parent or guardian. The office staff will check that the pupil has a valid reason to sign out and only then will they be allowed to sign out and to depart the site with their parent or guardian.



- In case of children becoming unwell during the day, their class teacher should speak to a member of SLT. The class teacher and member of SLT will determine if they may be sent home, in which case parents will be contacted and this will be logged.

5. Notification of absence and requests for absence

- Parents must report their child's absence for illness, medical appointments, admission tests and interviews (where permitted) via email before 8.00am or by telephoning the absence line before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, advising when the pupil is expected to return.
- If a parent has contacted the Class teacher by email to notify them of a medical appointment, the Class teacher should:
 - Acknowledge the email,
 - Mark the pupil as 'M' if they will miss a registration/s
 - Forward the email to the school office.
 - Advise the parent that they can email the school office to report absence for illness and routine medical appointments

6. Patterns of absence and strategies to promote good attendance

- 6.1 Every month, attendance reports are generated by the school office which are shared with the DSL (Senior Attendance Champion). These reports allow any pattern of absence or lates to be easily identified and followed up with the pupil's parents.
- 6.2 The Class teacher is responsible for tracking and identifying any pattern of absence or lates and should liaise with the DSL (where appropriate) to ensure that this is closely monitored. The teacher should liaise with the DSL as appropriate in order to flag up any potential academic or pastoral concerns.
- 6.3 The DSL should maintain overall oversight of the process of monitoring and following up on pupil absence and lateness, ensuring that attendance information is considered alongside safeguarding, pastoral and wellbeing concerns and that appropriate action is taken.
- 6.4 Class teachers should liaise with the DSL if they have concerns relating to patterns of absence and must report absence of 10 consecutive days to the DSL and notify the DSL of any pupils who they have reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively across the school year because of sickness. Where a pupil's attendance falls below 80% in one half term, the DSL will, in conjunction with the pupil's class teacher examine the reasons given for the absences.
- 6.5 The DSL/Senior Attendance Champion reviews patterns of absence and lateness systematically each month, including attendance within vulnerable groups such as pupils with SEND, looked-after and previously looked-after children, pupils with social workers and pupils experiencing mental health or wellbeing needs. This analysis is used to identify emerging concerns, inform appropriate support and intervention, and ensure that attendance barriers are addressed promptly.
- 6.6 The school is also required to provide attendance returns and sickness returns to the local authority where absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.



Persistent absence defined as below 90% attendance and severe absence defined as below 50% attendance. The DSL will ensure that the local authority is informed when a pupil is likely to miss or has missed 15 days of school because of sickness (consecutively or cumulatively across a school year) to help agree any provision needed to ensure continuity of education for pupils who cannot attend because of health needs. The DSL will also provide the local authority with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and/or U). These pupils receive enhanced monitoring and potential interventions will be put in place to support the family if appropriate.

- 6.7 For children below compulsory school age, attendance will be monitored with equal care and any patterns of concern will be addressed promptly with parents/carers and considered within the school's safeguarding and wellbeing procedures.

7. Pupils who are unable to attend school for medical reasons

- 7.1 We aim to support all children who are unable to attend school due to medical needs, and who would not receive suitable education without such provision, to continue to have access to as much education as their medical condition allows and to enable them to reach their full potential. Particular consideration will be given to the impact on the child's learning, development, relationships and sense of belonging within the school community.
- 7.2 Due to the nature of their health needs, some children may require hospital admission, alternative education provision or temporary adjustments to their education. The school will work to maintain educational provision and support reintegration to full-time attendance as soon as this is appropriate.
- 7.3 In exceptional circumstances temporary part-time timetables may be provided for pupils, for example where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school full-time. Reduced timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances and where they are considered to be in the best interests of the child. Any reduced timetable will be agreed in writing with parents/carers, be time-limited and subject to regular review, with the expectation that the child will return to full-time education as soon as possible. The school will monitor the child's attendance, wellbeing and safeguarding throughout the period of reduced provision. Reduced timetables will not be used informally or as an alternative to appropriate support and intervention.
- 7.4 We understand that we have a continuing role in a pupil's education whilst they are not attending the school and will work as appropriate on a case-by-case basis with the LA, healthcare partners and families to ensure that all children with medical needs receive the right level of support to enable them to maintain links with their education.
- 7.5 The school will notify the local authority regarding pupils who are unable to attend school because of health needs in accordance with the procedures set out in Section 6.6.
- 7.6 The school recognises that barriers to attendance may include SEND, mental health difficulties, anxiety-based school avoidance, bereavement or family circumstances



and will work collaboratively with pupils, families and external agencies to provide appropriate support.

8. Children who are absent from education

8.1 A child missing education from school due to repeated or unexplained absence, or by being withdrawn from school unexpectedly, is a potential indicator of wider safeguarding concerns, or where a family may be in need of additional support or early help. This section of the policy deals with children who miss schooling in these circumstances, particularly on repeat occasions and for those children who are withdrawn from the school without clear indications of where they will be continuing their education.

8.2 Section 8 of this policy covers those instances where:

- there is a repeated pattern of absence;
- the reason for absence is unclear or unexplained;
- a member of staff has concerns about the nature of a pupil's absence.

8.3 In those instances, the following procedure should be followed:

8.3.1 On the first day of absence, if no reason for absence has been provided, the attendance secretary will contact the parents to obtain information about absence and the likely period of absence in accordance with this policy. Where the pupil cannot be accounted for the procedures set out in the missing child policy should be followed.

8.3.2 If the parents have not provided any evidence to justify the absence after 10 continuous school days of absence, (or a shorter period if the Class Teacher has concerns) the DSL should be consulted. If the DSL is concerned that there is insufficient evidence to support the continued absence, the Class Teacher or DSL should contact the parents to obtain further information about the reason for the pupil's absence. The information obtained from the parent should be sufficient to satisfy the DSL that the absence is justified, and that the pupil is not at risk of harm. This may include the parents providing informal medical evidence or where appropriate a home visit. Any home visits will be conducted in accordance with safeguarding procedures and lone working/risk assessment guidance. The DSL will also notify the local authority if required as set out in 6.6 above.

8.3.3 Where a pupil's attendance falls below 80% in one half term, the DSL will, in conjunction with the pupil's Class Teacher examine the reasons given for the absences.

8.3.4 Where concerns regarding attendance persist, the school will adopt a graduated and supportive approach. This may include pastoral meetings with parents/carers, reintegration plans following periods of absence, reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND or mental health needs, support for pupils experiencing emotionally based school avoidance, early help assessments and, where appropriate, liaison with external agencies and multi-agency working to address barriers to attendance.

8.3.5 Where concerns remain regarding the reasons for a pupil's absence, the DSL will seek advice from the local authority and follow the procedures detailed in the



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, recording all actions and discussions in accordance with statutory guidance.

9. Admissions register

- 9.1 When a pupil leaves the school, the school will contact the receiving school to ensure the child is registered at the school and has started to attend. If a child protection file has been created, the DSL will then forward the appropriate records directly to the DSL of the receiving school and a confirmation of receipt will be obtained. The school will also notify the local authority when a child leaves the school following the guidance as directed by Merton local authority and as described in Working together to improve school attendance, August 2024).
- 9.2 When a pupil leaves the school without clear indication of a receiving school, the school will contact local authorities to advise them of the situation and to start their tracking procedures. In case of serious concern, the DSL will contact the local authorities for further advice, in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- 9.3 If a pupil leaves or joins the school at a non-standard transition point, the school will notify Merton local authority of their departure or arrival within 5 days.

10. Monitoring and review

- 10.1 This policy is monitored by the DSL/Senior Attendance Champion and will be reviewed annually or in the light of changes to legislation.



Appendix 1 – registration codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [working together to improve school attendance August 2024](#) guidance

Code	Definition	Scenario
Attendance		
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at school during morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at school during afternoon registration*
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Approved off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school. NB: nature of the approved educational activity should be recorded in the attendance register. (eg attending transition days at other schools)
K	Local authority arranged educational provision	Pupil is attending a place, other than a school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by the local authority. NB: nature of the educational provision should be recorded in the attendance register.
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence for exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances, other than those in C1 or C2
C1	Authorised leave of absence due to participating in a	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence to participate in a regulated performance or undertake employment (paid or unpaid) abroad



	regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	
C2	Authorised leave of absence due to part-time timetable	Pupil of compulsory school age is subject to a temporary part-time timetable as agreed between the school and parent
D	Dual registered at another school	Pupil is absent with leave to attend the other school at which they are registered (e.g. pupil attending a PRU, hospital school or special school on a temporary basis)
E	Excluded	Pupil has been suspended from school or permanently excluded from school on disciplinary grounds but no alternative provision has been made
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
J1	Interview for employment or admission to another educational institution	Pupil has an assessment for or interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves)
S	Study leave (for a public examination)	Pupil is absent for the purpose of studying for a public examination.
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a mobile child of compulsory school age who is of no fixed abode, their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them.
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend



Unable to attend school because of an unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is absent because the local authority has a legal duty to arrange home-to-school transport for the pupil and they have not done so
Y1	Transport normally provided is not available	Pupil unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home (2 miles for pupil under the age of 8, 3 miles for pupil aged 8 or above) and transport normally provided by the school or local authority is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency

Y3	Part of the school premises is closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those parts of the premises that remain in use
Y4	Whole school site is unexpectedly closed	School was planned to be open, but is closed unexpectedly, eg due to adverse weather
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is in police or youth detention or prison.
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil unable to attend due to government guidance or legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	Pupil unable to attend due to an unavoidable cause not covered in Y1-6, eg an emergency affecting the pupil such as the pupil being legally required to attend court. The nature of the unavailable cause must be recorded on the register.

Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended within 5 school days when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been established within 5 school days)



O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence or no reason for absence has been established
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school late, after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day