Attendance policy

Westmorland Primary school

September 2026

Contents:

Introduction

Our vision for attendance

Parental expectations

School expectations

Reasons for Absence

Punctuality

School Procedures

Medical Action Plan

Child Missing in Education (CME)

Education Welfare Service

Legal Sanctions

Legal Responsibilities for School

Legal Responsibilities for Parents/Carers

Appendix

Ratification

Introduction

At Westmorland, we believe the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward good punctuality and attendance along with making the best provision we can for those children, who for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

The Governors, Headteacher and staff at Westmorland Primary give the highest priority to school attendance and punctuality. Poor attendance and punctuality is a strong indicator of safeguarding concerns and can lead to poor attainment and educational outcomes. Therefore all staff are aware to be vigilant with attendance and report concerns promptly. We see this as a shared responsibility with parents and carers.

Children's attendance is monitored closely by the Pastoral Team and is in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026

Our vision for attendance

At school we will;

- Make improvements to attendance a key theme in school, incorporating this into the school development plan, part of staff appraisals and linking it with curriculum and behaviour.
- All staff will promote the importance of good attendance
- Ensure that staff have a good understanding of attendance-related matters.
- Children with 100% attendance will have an email sent home every Friday to congratulate them on their attendance for the week
- The class with the best attendance at the end of the week will receive 10 minutes extra play.
- Children with 100% attendance, at the end of each term, will be entered into a raffle to receive a £100 voucher, to be spent on a shopping trip with the head teacher at the end of a half term.
- All children with 100% attendance in a half term will receive a token for the vending machine
- Ensure that early intervention is explored as quickly as possible. Parents/carers whose child's attendance starts to cause concern will receive a letter informing them of their child's low attendance,
- If a child's attendance continues to be a concern then parents/carers will be invited into school for a meeting with the pastoral team to discuss their child's attendance, looking at the reasons for absence, barriers to coming into school and to formulate an action plan to support improvements.
- This will be reviewed every 4 weeks. If still no improvement after 2 cycles then a referral to Education Welfare will be made.
- At the end of term 1, 2 and 3, all staff who have 100% attendance of their own will be entered into a raffle for a reward. To be set at the time by the head teacher.
- Parents/carers of children who have 100% attendance at the end of the academic year will receive a letter home from the head teacher, praising them for their support and efforts.
- All children with 100% attendance at the end of the academic year will access an extracurricular activity outside of school, as a reward. This activity will be announced, by the head teacher, closer to the time.

Parental expectations

Parents are expected to support the school to improve attendance by;

- Ensuring their child attends school regularly and on time.
- Ensuring that school have up to date contact information including; home address, telephone numbers, emails and emergency contacts.
- Parents/carers must telephone school every day that their child is unable to attend school due to illness.
- Parents/carers may be required to provide medical evidence in relation to absences.
- Parents/carers will arrange medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible.
- Parents/carers raising any concerns affecting their child's attendance to a member of staff at the earliest opportunity.
- Attending meetings with school staff to discuss concerns if requested.
- Encouraging good routines at home to ensure children are prepared for school each day.
- Parents/carers will book appointments for their children, outside of school time.
- All parents/carers have agreed to this when they signed the home school agreement on admission.
- Parents/carers will book holidays during school holiday periods. Governors will not authorise holidays during school time, unless for exceptional circumstances. Unauthorised holidays will lead to a fine and possibly prosecution.

School expectations

At Westmorland Primary we will;

- Contact parents/carers by text or telephone on the first day of absence and any further days of absence. A call will be made to families at the end of the school day, also where a parent has not contacted school for their absence and also if a child has been poorly, to see if we can support that child and see when they will be back into school
- If we are not able to contact parents or have no response to contact the staff may carry out home visits to ascertain a reason for the absence.
- If a child is absent for three consecutive days, a home visit will be conducted
- The pastoral team will closely monitor attendance within school and follow the action plan should a child's attendance cause concern.
- The pastoral team will refer any child with 10 consecutive days of unauthorised absences to the local authority.
- School will ensure that all absences are recorded. Children will be registered and absences categorised appropriately.
- Governors will not authorise holidays during term time, unauthorised holidays will lead to fines for parents/carers and possibly prosecution.

Reasons for Absence

An absence is classified as *authorised* when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from the parent/carer. This could be because the child is ill or because of other exceptional circumstances.

An absence is classified as *unauthorised* when a child has been away from school without a justifiable reason. It is for the school, not the parents, to determine whether an absence should be authorised.

Children will be marked with an *illness* code when school is informed. Where a pupil is absent from school for a substantial period of time due to illness school will seek medical evidence before authorising the absence, this could be through contact with families, school nurses or GP surgery. If medical evidence is not produced the absences will not be authorised, and this could result in a referral to the Local Authority.

Parents are requested wherever possible to make medical or dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils will receive a *medical* code on the register. Pupils should attend school for part of the day, and whenever possible return to school after the appointment. The appointment card may be requested by the school for evidence.

At Westmorland we expect full attendance and we do not authorise holidays in term time. Parents should be aware that taking holidays without permission from the Governors may lead to a fixed penalty fine of £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days (£160 if paid within 28 days) being issued by the Local Authority.

Punctuality

At Westmorland we expect pupils to be punctual to school as it helps support their learning. Being on time prepares a child for a settled start to learning.

A member of staff will greet children who are late to school at the late door every morning. The late door will shut at 08.50, children arriving after this will have to sign in at the main reception. This is to monitor which children are coming into school late, to enquire for what reason and to support a settled start for the children. This also ensures that punctuality is closely monitored. Pupils arriving to school until 09.15 will be marked with an authorised late code ('L'). Pupils arriving after this time and after the registers have been closed (09.15) will be marked with a 'U' code (unauthorised late)

Continued poor punctuality will mean that school will ask to meet with parents to explore what support may be required to improve punctuality. This may lead to the decision to start the Pre-TAC process.

When a pupil is late after the close of register this is marked as *unauthorised.* A few minutes late each day add up to lost learning time over the year. Did you know that being late 15 minutes every day is the same as missing 2 whole weeks of school over a full academic year? Every minute counts and that lost time all adds up. Being late doesn't only affect

your child, it disrupts other children in the class as well as the teachers trying to teach a lesson. However, if you do think you are going to be late, please do not keep your child off school for the rest of the day. Being late and in school is better than being absent and missing out.

Persistent lateness will lead to a referral to the Local Authority, a fine and possible prosecution.

School Procedures

Parents/Carers are asked to notify school the morning of an absence and where possible to be notified in advance of an up-coming absence, for example, medical appointments.

When a child is unexpectedly absent from school, the class teacher will record the absence on the electronic SIMS register. These absences are then checked and followed up by the admin staff by trying to make contact with home through texts messages and phone calls. If no contact is made and there are safeguarding concerns, it may be appropriate for a home visit to be carried out by a member of staff.

The absentees are monitored daily by the office staff and the pastoral team. For those children who have regular and repeated absences, both authorised and unauthorised, parent/carers will receive a letter for them to attend a *Pre-TAC* meeting to discuss the child's attendance. The letter of invitation states that if the parent should not attend, then school will no longer authorise further absences without medical evidence, if required.

The Pre-TAC meeting may identify that the children/family are in need of further support. This may mean that the school feels it appropriate to seek further advice from outside agencies. School may feel that the family would benefit from support and complete an Early Help Assessment (EHA) with the family. This would lead to the school initiating TAC meetings with the families and services.

Parents/carers will be given three opportunities to engage with the Pre-TAC process, to support school and improve their child's attendance. If parents/carers fail to engage and no improvement is shown after two attempts, Senior Leadership Team will chair the third meeting. Should parents/carers fail to engage in this final attempt then school will refer the family to Children's Social Care for additional support.

Children with specific support regarding their attendance and punctuality not linked to a wide area of support will be supported within school by the Pastoral Team. School will put in the appropriate intervention within school to support the child's barrier to school.

If during the first initial Pre-TAC it is not felt that further support is appropriate at that time then a review period will be agreed with school and the parent/carer. During this review period the child's attendance will be carefully monitored and the parent/carer will receive supporting phone calls from the pastoral team. If the child's attendance improves during the review period then a letter recognising the improvement will be sent home.

Medical Action Plans

If your child has a long term illness/condition that is having an impact on their school attendance then a Medical Action Plan may be considered during the Pre-TAC meeting. If this is felt appropriate the school will seek support from school nurse and Education Welfare Service to reduce the school.

In line with our duties within the Equality Act (2010) we will work closely with families to ensure that no child is put at a disadvantage for a reason directly linked to their disability; as such this is not a blanket policy for all children and 'reasonable adjustments' may need to be explored in some cases.

Children Missing in Education (CME)

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, school have a duty to report children who are absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions. Repeat or consistent absence are warning signs of safeguarding issues.

Pupils who are continuously absent for 10 days or more without reasonable explanation will be referred to the Local Authority and/or to Children's Social Services. If school have safeguarding concerns and are unable to make contact with parents/carers or the child then staff may request a police welfare check to ascertain the safety of the pupil. This would be done without parent/carers prior knowledge.

Educational Welfare Service

School has an allocated Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) who we can seek advice from for any pupil with a concerning attendance percentage. School may also, but not always, invite the EWO to attend attendance meetings or to be involved in the EHA, if this process is appropriate.

If your child is absent from school for 10 consecutive days or within a 10 week period then an enforcement referral will be made to the Educational Welfare Service. Once this is made the Educational Welfare Service will consider the referral for *Notice to Improve* or *Parent Contract Meeting*

If a Notice to Improve is felt necessary then;

A Notice to Improve (NTI) is a formal notice from the Local Authority that a child's attendance is not acceptable. It provides parents with a final opportunity to improve attendance so as to avoid an EPN fine. It also points parents to sources of support in approving attendance.

· Focus the family's attention on the need to improve attendance over a short period of time. NTI's are most likely to be appropriate in cases where there do not appear to be any significant barriers to improved attendance such as medical issues, mental health issues, bullying issues or complex family issues.

· The NTI advises the parent(s) that if there are any unauthorised absences in the next 15 school days, they will receive an EPN.

· EPNs issued following service of NTIs, alongside those issued in respect of unauthorised Leave of Absence, will be subject to the new rules on Education Penalty Notice escalation. This means that the first fine issued to a parent in relation to a particular child for offences of either type will be £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid within 22- 28 days. Fines for second offences of either type will be for £160 payable within 28 days. No further Education Penalty Notices can be issued if two have already been issued within a rolling three year period, so alternative strategies, including prosecution, will need to be considered.

· At the end of the 15-day period, the Education Welfare Service will check attendance and determine whether or not to issue an EPN

· In all cases, attendance will be monitored by the Education Welfare Service for a period of 3 months following the initial 15 day period.

At the end of the 3 month period, if attendance still meets the threshold for enforcement, i.e. at least 10 unauthorised absences in 10 school weeks, the case will be assessed for suitability for further enforcement, and moved to Stage 3(b)

If an Attendance Contract is felt necessary then;

- *Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will carry out an initial assessment and share the assessment with the school and the parent.*
- *If enforcement is appropriate, an Attendance Contract Meeting will be arranged by the School,*
- *The meeting will be chaired by the School. The meeting should discuss any absences and create a plan and review.*
- *Further plans should be put in place and actions agreed to support attendance, with all parties clear on what it expected of them. This will be written up into a Parent Contract by the EWO and circulated to all parties.*
- *A review meeting will be arranged for **4 weeks**,*

Legal Sanctions

Regular school attendance is a legal duty on parents and carers. If a parent fails to ensure their child attends school regularly, they are guilty of an offence under section 444(1) or (1A) of the Education Act 1996.

A parent who commits this offence may be liable to prosecution in the Magistrates' Court and, depending on which offence they are convicted of, may be liable to a fine of up to £2500 or a term of imprisonment of up to three months.

Although school will offer support in addressing attendance issues, it will also refer pupils whose attendance fails to improve, or who take leave of absence from school without agreement, to the Education Welfare Service within Stockport Council

Legal Responsibilities for School

Under the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations Act 2006 school is responsible for making sure that school keeps an attendance register that records which children are present at both the start of the morning and start of the afternoon session. School will be clear about the close of the register and correctly record this on the register. These registers will also mirror attendance for educational off site visits and be recorded appropriately.

School is also responsible for reporting pupils and families who fail to attend regularly and for children who are missing in Education (CME). These are children who have 10 days absence continuously, within a 10 week window or without reasonable explanation. School has a duty to report this to the Local Authority and could refer to an array of services.

This is done to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of all children. Families will usually be informed of a referral to services however there may be occasions where this is not appropriate.

Legal Responsibilities for Parents/Carers

Under the Education Act 1996, parents/Carers are responsible for making sure that their children, of compulsory school age, receive a suitable full-time education. This includes ensuring regular attendance and punctuality. Non-attendance will not go unchallenged and parents/carers are accountable for any session that their children miss from school for any reason.

Parent/carers who fail to ensure regular attendance and punctuality at their child's registered school may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the Local Authority.

Attendance Action Plan

Attendance	Action
100%	Excellent attendance/punctuality which will be celebrated
96% - 99%	Good attendance/punctuality which will be celebrated
93% - 95%	**Beginning to cause concern** Parents/carers receive a letter informing them of their child's low attendance and punctuality, asking for this to improve. Some parents/carers will be invited in to discuss their child's attendance
90% - 92%	**Serious Concern** Parents/carers attend school for a meeting to discuss their child's attendance Reasons and barriers to accessing school identified and an action plan agreed
Below 90%	**Persistently Absent and high risk concern** 2 week timeframe to improve attendance If still no improvement then a referral to Education Welfare Service leading to a fine and potential for prosecution
50% or below	**Severley Absent and high risk concern** Referral to other agencies including social care to put a plan in place to improve attendance

Ratification

Policy Author: Tracy Taylor

Policy Reviewed By:

Policy reviewer role:

Date of Ratification: