Attendance & Punctuality policy
West Green Primary School

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Safeguarding Statement

At West Green Primary School we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn, in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at West Green Primary School. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

Attendance & Punctuality policy
West Green Primary School

At West Green Primary School we seek to ensure that all pupils receive a high quality, full-time, appropriate education in a safe and caring environment to enable all pupils to reach their full potential.

Using a whole school ethos, all members of the school community (including parents/carers and pupils) will be involved in encouraging and facilitating full school attendance so that all pupils are able to access all of the opportunities available to them during the primary phase of their education.

We aim to develop and continue positive and consistent communication between school, home and LA officers.

PRINCIPLES

- The Education Act 1996, section 7 states that, "*The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise*".

- It is important that school staff, pupils, parents/carers value good school attendance and punctuality. Staff and parents/carers should be aware of their rights and responsibilities with regard to the attendance of pupils.

PURPOSE OF THE ATTENDANCE & PUCTUALITY POLICY

- To promote, improve and maintain good levels of attendance and punctuality, reducing absence including persistent absence and severe absence.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school, ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- To minimise disruption to the learning environment caused by lateness and absence and to maximise pupils' educational opportunities.
- To develop a framework with defined and agreed roles and responsibilities which provides support, guidance and consistency in the area of school attendance and punctuality.
- To act early to address patterns of absence including working with the Education Welfare Service.
- To build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

- Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that,
  'If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.'

- The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent/carer does not in itself authorise an absence. Absences will only be authorised by the Head teacher if they are satisfied with the validity of the explanation and any evidence offered for the absence.
- The keeping of accurate registers is required by law. Registration must take place twice each day: once at the beginning of the day and once during the afternoon.

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance (updated in August 2024) 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:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

LOCAL AUTHORITY ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES FURTHER ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Improving and maintaining good school attendance and punctuality is the responsibility of everyone in the school community.

The Governing Body

- The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring, reviewing and challenging attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis.
- It will promote the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- It will make sure staff are adequately trained on attendance and school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- It also holds the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Head Teacher

- The Head Teacher will ensure that this policy is implemented.
- The Head Teacher will monitor school-level absence data as well as any impact of implemented attendance strategies and report it to Governors termly.
- The Head Teacher will ensure that manual and electronic registers are kept accurately in accordance with legislation and that electronic registers are updated regularly. See attendance procedures, guidance for schools and services.
- The Head Teacher will oversee the authorisation of all absences.

- The Head Teacher will ensure that an accurate daily record of lateness is kept by use of a late book and that information from the late book is transferred to the electronic registers daily.
- The Head Teacher will ensure that the importance of good school attendance and punctuality and the expectations of this are featured in the school information pack and are communicated to parents/carers of pupils at the school regularly including through the use of the DfE 'Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance.
- The Head teacher will ensure appropriate letters are sent to parents/carers.
- The Head Teacher will ensure that where a pupil's attendance has deteriorated and is within the remit to be referred to the Education Welfare Service, referrals are made promptly in line with LA and DSCF guidance. The Head Teacher will work with the EWS regarding when to issue fixed-penalty notices.
- The Head Teacher will decide whether to authorise parental requests for leave of absence in term time on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the year group of the child, attendance history, previous requests for leave, the impact of leave on the child's educational outcomes, the reason for the request and the time of year. The Head Teacher will communicate their decision to parents/carers in writing via the request form and the Attendance Officer. Holidays taken during the school term are discouraged as they will impact negatively on a child's ability to achieve. Term-time holidays will not be authorised in the majority of cases.
- The Head Teacher will designate a member of staff to meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer for the school and to represent the school in meetings regarding attendance with parents/carers and other professionals. This member of staff will be in a position to feedback to the Head teacher appropriately so that strategic decisions may be taken.
- The Head Teacher will set challenging attendance targets for the school each academic year informed by analysis of the school's attendance data and in agreement with Local Authority.
- The Head Teacher will support key staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils as appropriate.
- The Head Teacher will ensure the application of late procedures at the beginning and end of the school day.

The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

Working with the Head Teacher

- The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance will lead attendance across the school.
- Offer a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Evaluate and monitor expectations and processes.
- Have an oversight of data analysis.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues.
- Deliver targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance is the Deputy Head Teacher and can be contacted via emailing the school's admin address FAO the Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance – admin@westgreen.haringey.sch.uk

Class Teachers

- The Class Teacher will keep an accurate record of attendance and absence in accordance with LA and DCSF guidance.
- The Class Teacher will alert the HT and DHT to any pupils about whom they have concerns regarding their school attendance and punctuality.
- The Class Teacher will differentiate accordingly between authorised and unauthorised absence. The class teacher will monitor the attendance of the pupils in their class and will follow up reasons for absences promptly.
- The Class Teacher will talk to parents/carers as soon as concerns arise about attendance and punctuality and will discuss attendance with parents/carers during Progress Evening meetings.
- The Class Teacher will take the register between 8.55am and 9am to ensure consistency of registration across the school. PM registrations will be taken at 1pm (Reception and KS1) and at 1:30pm (KS2) – registers will be submitted within 10 minutes.
- The Class Teacher will return registers to the office promptly after registration at 9.05am. (Either electronically or by hand as appropriate)
- The Class Teacher will encourage and promote good attendance and punctuality (through the school / class reward system).

Attendance Team

- The Attendance Team will promote good school attendance through regular assemblies at school and highlighting attendance regularly in newsletters.
- The Attendance Team will update attendance and absence data accurately and promptly from manual registers to electronic registers.
- The Attendance Team will code absences in accordance with the DCSF codes (*Appendix 1*) in the registers.
- The Attendance Team will record messages left regarding children's absence in the register accordingly, including, where illness is cited as the reason, the nature of the illness.
- The Attendance Team will monitor lateness effectively and will record the time of arrival of pupils and the reason for their late arrival in their class register.
- The Attendance Team will operate First Day Calling for pupils who are absent from school where a parent/carer has not contacted the school regarding their absence and will keep a log of these calls (*Appendix 2*).
- The Attendance Team will, monitor lateness in the morning and evening. Morning lateness will be recorded in electronic registration systems and afternoon lateness will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team. Where children are not collected at 4pm, a written record will be made, and the number of occurrences will be monitored. Parents/Carers may be invited to a meeting to discuss the concern. Regular late collection may result in a referral to Social Services.
- The Attendance Officer will monitor attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level, reporting any concerns to the HT and DHT.
- The Attendance Team, with the Head Teacher, will benchmark attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.

- The Attendance Officer will work with the EWS to tackle persistent absence.
- The Attendance Officer will arrange calls, meetings and clinics with parents/carers, sometimes with the EWS, the DHT and/or HT. In addition, the Attendance Officer may arrange for community language speaking school staff to support families who may be assisted by a translator where possible (or link families with other community and English speaking families if appropriate).
- The Attendance Officer will advise the Head Teacher, in line with the EWS, regarding when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

The Attendance Team consists of the School Business Manager and the Attendance Officer (Admin Assistant) – they can be contacted via emailing the school's admin address FAO the Attendance Team – admin@westgreen.haringey.sch.uk

Education Welfare Service

- Will meet with the school regularly, via the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) and will discuss open cases, all pupils with attendance of below 90% *(this equates to absence exceeding six sessions/three days in a six-week period)* and pupils whose attendance is beginning to cause concern.
- Will support relevant school staff with appropriate attendance training.
- Will support the school to identify poor patterns of attendance through data provided by the school, for individual pupils and cohorts of pupils e.g. by gender, ethnicity, SEND, FSM, year group and at whole school level and help them to implement strategies to address these.
- Will support staff in the development of whole school approaches to maintain and develop excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Will assist those families who are experiencing difficulties with school attendance through offering parenting advice, signposting to other agencies and working within a multi-agency framework.
- Where the school's attempts to improve attendance of individual pupils have failed, the EWO will carry out attendance clinic meetings with parents/carers and school staff to alert them to the concerns about poor attendance and of their legal responsibilities prior to them being referred to EWO.
- Will progress all referrals for poor school attendance, in line with the service level agreement, through the fast-track to attendance scheme (if appropriate). This will include legal action where necessary.
- Will support and advise the School on when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

Parents / Carers

- Will be expected to make sure their child attends every school day and on time.
- Will be expected to notify the school on the first day of their child's absence.
- Will be expected to avoid making medical / dental appointments during the school day where possible.
- Will be expected to provide copies of appointment cards and letters to the school for absences.
- Will be expected to ensure that their children are prepared for school so that they arrive at school on time every day.
- Will be expected to encourage their children about the importance of attending school every day.

- Will be expected to apply to the Head Teacher using the Special Leave application form (*Appendix 3*), for any leave of absence within the school term **BEFORE** making any bookings. The Head Teacher and parents/carers will discuss the reason for the holiday/absence and ways in which to maximise attendance at school. Holidays in term time are not a right and will most likely be unauthorised.
- Will be expected to contact the school and/or the EWO if they are having trouble ensuring their child's regular attendance at school.
- Will be expected to collect (or arrange to be collected) their child at the end of the school day. Children will be supervised until 4pm by senior staff. Any late collection after this time will be recorded, monitored and may result in a referral to Social Services.
- Will be expected to provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child (the school may wait initially and then try to support families in making such arrangements where necessary, for example for families who are new to the country/area and don't yet have a support network).

Pupils

- Pupils are expected to attend school on every school day and on time.
- Pupils will be made aware of the importance of regular and punctual attendance at school.
- Pupils will be encouraged to talk to a member of school staff if there is anything which makes them feel unhappy at school and could reduce their willingness to attend.

Recording Attendance – attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.
We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

Pupils must arrive at school by 8:55am on each school day.

- The register for the first session will be taken between 8:55 and 9:05am and will be kept open until 9:25am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm (Reception and KS1) and at 1:30pm (KS2) – registers will be submitted within 10 minutes, and will be kept open until 1:20 and 1:50pm respectively.

Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the school by phone or email to the school's admin address on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – before 9:00am or as soon as practically possible.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents/carers to provide 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.

Medical or dental appointments

Absence to attend a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences (please speak with or email the school office with evidence of the medical/dental appointment – this could include an appointment card or letter or show appointment texts on a phone). 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. Please see the 'Approval for term-time absence' section and Appendix 3 below to find out which term-time absences the school may be able to authorise.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed (between 9:00 and 9:25am) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.
At West Green, lateness is monitored daily both at drop-off and collection. Where patterns of poor punctuality are identified, an initial reminder letter is sent. If the situation does not improve, the parents/carers will be invited to a meeting to discuss ways to support improvement. If there continues to be no improvement, a referral to the EWS will be made.

Following up absence

The school will follow up any unexpected/unexplained absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

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 the parents/carers or any of the pupil's emergency contacts, and subsequent emails (if appropriate) go unanswered, the school may refer to the Educational Welfare Service, Social Services and/or contact the Police as is deemed appropriate in the individual case.

Reporting to Parents/Carers

Attendance is reported to parents/carers during termly Progress Meetings and via a written mid-year or end-of-year report, unless there is a concern. Where there is a concern, parents/carers will receive reminder and/or warning letters as concerns arise and if there is no improvement.

Approval for Term-Time Absence

The Head Teacher 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 Head Teacher's discretion, in accordance with DfE guidance, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as unavoidable, 'one-off', often emergency events that are beyond the control of the family.

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, before booking any travel. Requests should be made in person at the school office using the leave of absence request form (available at the office). The Head Teacher will require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence **MAY** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see above)
- 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
- 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, appropriate evidence has been provided and the absence has been agreed with the school in good time in advance of the absence - it may not be known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

- Other possible unforeseen 'exceptional circumstances' may exist – please make any requests at the school office **BEFORE** booking any arrangements.
- Please note that West Green Primary School does not offer Flexi-Schooling, will not authorise any such absence and may apply attendance concern processes in this event.

Legal Sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, **each parent/carer** must pay £80 within 21 days, after this, the amount payable increases to £160 for **each parent/carer**. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

If a second penalty notice is issued within three years, the amount payable is £160 for **each parent/carer** and must be paid within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Head Teacher, local authority officer or the police.

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

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil 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.

Promoting and Monitoring Attendance

Whole class attendance is celebrated weekly in our celebration assembly and high attendance is rewarded.
Attendance is noted and celebrated in newsletters including information supporting good attendance and punctuality.
Regular meetings are held with families to support their attendance and punctuality, where these are not meeting expected standards.
Late-Gate events and attendance clinics supported by the EWO.

The School will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

- Send warning letters/communications to families where attendance is dipping and/or not improving as well as sending congratulatory letters/communications to families where poor attendance is improving
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern half-termly leading to follow-up action which may include a clinic meeting with school staff and/or the EWO

(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.)

- 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
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

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

Monitoring this Policy

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Head Teacher and the Senior Leadership Team. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Governing Body.

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Present Codes	
/ \	present during registration
B	educated off site and for taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority under Section 19 of the EA 1996
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	participation in a sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip supervised by a member of the school staff
W	attending work experience under arrangements by the school or local authority
Absent Codes	
Authorised Absences	
C	absence due to exceptional circumstances, agreed by the headteacher
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable, agreed by the headteacher and parent(s)/carer(s)
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded, and no alternative provision made
I	illness (both physical and mental health related; not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed; any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being unexpectedly closed
Y4	unable to attend due to unexpected whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
Unauthorised Absences	
G	holiday or absence for leisure-related purposes (not agreed by the headteacher)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	prospective pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (e.g., holidays, Insets and polling station days)

Appendix 2 – First Day Contact Guidelines

First day contact is a widely used practice in schools and has been shown to improve attendance rates. The correct procedure at West Green Primary School is as follows:

- As soon as the registers are returned to the office, staff check absentees against messages received.
- For persistent absentees, see the relevant section above. For other pupils for whom no message has been received, staff will attempt to make contact with the parent/carer at the earliest opportunity.
- When contact is made, the parent/carer will be asked for the reason for absence. In the event that no proper reason is supplied, the parent/carer will be informed that the absence will not be authorised.
- In the case of minor ailments, the parent/carer will be encouraged to send the child in with an assurance that school will keep a close eye on them. (NB – if there has been a spate of certain symptoms in the school or community, such minor illnesses may be treated as a valid reason for absence).
- Where no contact is made, a message should be left asking the parent/carer to contact the school. Where it is impossible to leave a message, a note should be sent.
- Reasons for absence are then added to the register.

Appendix 3 – requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to maximise their educational opportunities. Interruptions in school attendance disrupt continuity of learning and have a negative impact on attainment. It is the school's responsibility to provide the best education possible. We can only do this if children attends regularly. There is a direct correlation between achievement and attendance, well before GCSEs. The Government's guidance states that only under exceptional circumstances may the Head Teacher consider giving permission for a child to be absent from school for a maximum of 10 days in any one school year.

APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OR ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE / NON-EXTENDED HOLIDAY OR EXTENDED TRIPS OVERSEAS

Full Name of Child(ren)

NAME	CLASS	ADDRESS

Reason……

……

……

Has travel already been booked? Please provide details

……

……

(Please note that you should request leave from the Head Teacher **BEFORE** you book travel arrangements)

Dates of leave period …… to ……

Anticipated date of return to school:

……

Signature of Parent / Carer: ……Date: ……

Please print your name: Mr / Mrs / Ms

……

When considering your request for leave of absence the Head Teacher will take the following into consideration:

- The child's overall pattern of attendance
- The age of the children
- The child's stage of education
- The time of the year (SATs or Exams)
- The length, destination and purpose of the holiday/visit and whether it is likely to be a rare event in the life of the child.
- The family circumstances and the parents'/carers' reason for wanting to take their annual holiday during term time.
- Any other factors brought to the attention of the school