Attendance Policy and Procedures

Parent Summary



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| **Policy Author:**  | **Tobias Gooch** |
| **Date of Policy:** | **3rd September 2024** |
| **Date approved by Governors:** |  |
| **Next annual review date:** | **3rd September 2024** |

At Westfield Primary Academy, we want all pupils to aim for 100% attendance. We set expectations of excellent attendance for all and expect pupils to be in school every day that school is open unless they are too unwell to attend. This is really important so we can give your children the best education we can, and the education that they are entitled to.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and we will work together with parents, carers, guardians, pupils and any relevant partners to remove any barriers getting in the way of pupils attending regularly. Pupils with medical conditions or other circumstances that may at times prevent regular attendance will be fully supported by our school, in partnership, where necessary, with any health or external professionals. Promoting and supporting excellent attendance is everybody’s concern within our school and community.

The provision of a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive school where all pupils feel that they belong, and want to be, is of paramount importance to us. We will work together with you to explore and support any child who is finding it difficult to attend school regularly.

# Key Attendance Contacts – Full List

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| **School Attendance Lead Name:** | Tobias Gooch |
| **Telephone number:**  | 01440761697 | **Emai:**  | t.gooch@westfieldprimaryacademy.co.uk |

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| **School Attendance Champion Name:** | Helen George |
| **Telephone number:**  | 01440761697 | **Email**:  | h.george@westfieldprimaryacademy.co.uk |

Please see the end of the document ([***Appendix 1***](#_Key_Attendance_Contacts)) for a full list of our school’s attendance contacts.

# Why is attending school regularly so important?

Excellent attendance is important for pupils to feel part of the school community and develop a sense of belonging. This supports each pupil’s all-round development, mental health, and well-being.

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| If attendance over the school year is: | …a pupil will miss this many days: | …and this many lessons:  |
| 100% | 0 | 0 |
| 95% | 10 | 50 |
| 90% | 19 | 95 |
| 85% | 29 | 145 |
| 80% | 39 | 195 |
| 75% | 49 | 245 |
| 70% | 58 | 290 |

If your child is unable to attend school due to medical reason or illness, please contact the main office before the start of the school day (08:35am) via the Arbor App or leave a message on the answer phone 01440 761697. Please give your child’s name, class and a detailed reason for the absence. If we do not hear from you before 09:30am, we will contact you via Arbor or telephone to gain a reason for the absence.

If you do not answer, or provide a detailed reason for absence, we may complete a welfare check where two members of our team will complete visit to your home address to ensure the safety of our pupils. If there is no answer and absence is persisting, we may refer to our Safeguarding Team or the Police in an emergency.

# How do we reward good and improving attendance

Each week, we will celebrate the class with the highest attendance and fewest lates in our celebration assembly. That class will be rewarded with Alfonso, The Attendance Alpaca. Alfonso will remain in the classroom for the week. In addition to this celebration, pupils in the highest attending class will be given attendance HERO lanyards to wear for the week to represent how hard they have worked to be in school everyday. HERO stands for: Here. Everyday. Ready. On time. At the end of each term, we will reward 100% attendance with certificates and an attendance party.

For individuals who have worked on improving their attendance, we will reward them with individual incentives such as lucky dip stationary prizes and stickers/certificates.

We believe that pupils and their families should work hard on instilling a sense of pride in attending school everyday and we aim to recognise and reward this where appropriate and possible.

# Absence requests

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take a child out of school during term time for any reason, including a holiday.

Only in very, very exceptional circumstances will absence requests be authorised.

In order to request an absence for an exception circumstance, please complete the Absence Request Form which can be obtained from the school office. This will need to be returned to the school office at least 2 weeks before the planned absence is due to occur. Failure to return within the timeframe may result in requests automatically being unauthorised. As previously stated, authorised absences are for exceptional circumstances only. Suffolk County Council state that holidays during term time for any reason is not an exceptional circumstance.

As part of our policy, we report unauthorised absences to Suffolk County Council who will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice if unauthorised absence reaches the threshold of 10 sessions (5 days) unauthorised absence. As a school, we follow the Local Authority’s fixed penalty notice procedure which can be found on the Suffolk County Council website.

# Unauthorised absence

An absence will be unauthorised if your child is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst as parents you can provide explanations for absence, it remains the school’s decision whether to authorise an absence or not.

Unauthorised absences may include:

* Absences which have never been properly explained
* Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
* Absences for shopping, birthdays, day trips, errands
* Absences whereby parents state they are waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
* Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless in very, very exceptional circumstances as agreed in advance by the school)
* If a pupil is kept away from school longer than has been agreed -any additional absence will be unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in the use of penalty notices or prosecution. The most recent guidance from Suffolk County Council is that fixed penalty notices can be issued for 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period. If another 10 session period occurs in the subsequent 10 weeks, another fixed penalty notice can be issued. If a further

# Support for school attendance

Sometimes your child may not want to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reasons for absence. If your child does not want to attend school, it is never better to cover up their absence or give in to pressure to let your child stay at home. This can give the impression to your child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why your child may not want to attend school so we can support you and your child in the best way possible.

If your child needs some support to home, please contact the school office as usual a member of the Pastoral Team will get back to you as soon as possible to work on ways to support your child.

For pupils with medical conditions or other circumstances that may at times prevent regular attendance we will fully support each pupil to be able to attend as much as possible. Our school will use an individual health plan and will work alongside other relevant professionals such as health colleagues, and yourselves, to best support this.

Please contact Mr Gooch or Mrs Jones (SENDCo) in these events but please also make the school office aware so that the correct absence codes can be used.

If our school is unable to work in partnership with you as parents, we may refer to the Local Authority. We will only ever do this if everything else has failed. We hope as parents you will work with us to best support your child so this does not need to happen.

If our school has any safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary to ensure a child’s safety and well-being.

At Westfield Primary Academy, we want your child to thrive, be able to achieve their potential and be happy. School attendance is foundational for academic success, personal development, and for future opportunities and at Westfield Primary Academy, we want to support all our families to ensure that every pupil can make the most of their time at our school.

Appendix 1

# Key Attendance Contacts – Full List

Below is a list of our key contacts for Attendance Support out our school. We will keep this document up-to-date and it will reflect staff changes when they happen. If you have printed this document, please see our school website for the most up-to-date version of this document.

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| **School Attendance Lead Name:** | Mr T Gooch |
| **Telephone number:**  | 01440761697 | **Email**:  | t.gooch@westfieldprimaryacademy.co.uk |

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| **School Attendance Champion Name:** | Miss H George |
| **Telephone number:**  | 01440761697 | **Email**:  | admin@westfieldprimaryacademy.co.uk |

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| **Pastoral Support Lead:** | Mr T Gooch |
| **Telephone number:**  | 01440761697 | **Email**:  | t.gooch@westfieldprimaryacademy.co.uk |

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| **SENDCo:** | Mrs A Jones |
| **Telephone number:**  | 01440761697 | **Email**:  | a.jones@westfieldprimaryacademy.co.uk |

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| **Designated Safeguarding Lead:** | Mrs H Game |
| **Telephone number:**  | 01440761697 | **Email**:  | h.game@westfieldprimaryacdemy.co.uk |

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| **Governor for Attendance:** | Becky Poynter |
| **Telephone number:**  | 01440761697 | **Email**:  | admin@westfieldprimaryacademy.co.uk |