

Title	Attendance Policy
Year	2025/2026
Policy Reference	Browne Jacobson LLP
Staff Link	Vice Principal – Sam MacDonnell
Governor Link	Chair of Trustees
Date approved by CEO on behalf of Full Governing Body	September 2025
Review Date	September 2027

1 Aim of this policy

To support excellent levels of attendance for all learners to enable fulfilment of their potential at Wootton Park Academy Trust

This policy has been prepared with regard to the Trust's statutory duties relating to attendance, including those set out in the Department for Education's statutory guidance entitled [Working together to improve school attendance \(2024\)](#), which is referred to in this policy as the "DfE Attendance Guidance".

2 Key principles

- High levels of attendance and punctuality levels are promoted and rewarded.
- It is the responsibility of everybody at Wootton Park Academy Trust to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Where attendance or punctuality fall short of expected standards, steps will be taken to address this and sanctions may be applied in accordance with the behaviour policy.
- Some learners find it harder than others to attend school. The Trust will work with learners, parents and other local partners to remove any barriers to attendance.
- Subject to the terms of this policy, any day-to-day attendance issues that parents or learners have should be discussed with the form tutor or the class teacher. Where more detailed support around attendance is required, parents and learners should contact the Head of Year or in the case of primary learners a member of Primary SLT.

3 Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Trust / School

We will:

- develop and maintain a whole Trust culture that promotes the benefit of high attendance. Learners receive House Points for good attendance, which accumulate and contribute towards a rewards trip at the end of the academic year. Learners are rewarded with House Points and an Attendance Certificate in termly celebration assemblies.
- work with learners and their families, building strong relationships, to support high levels of attendance and punctuality and understand any barriers to attendance
- investigate unexplained or unjustified absence, applying sanctions where appropriate
- take into account individual needs when implementing this policy, including having regard to the Academy's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Ensure that safeguarding checks are completed for all Alternative Provisions and that these are reviewed regularly.
- share daily attendance data and other attendance information, including returns information required to be shared in accordance with regulations and the DfE Attendance Guidance, and work collaboratively with the local authority, other schools in the area and other partners including, where required, making appropriate referrals in accordance with local procedures, legislation and guidance

- regularly monitor, review and analyse attendance and absence data including to identify learners or cohorts that require attendance support and to set targets for the future
- ensure that all learners can access full-time education, putting strategies in place where this is evidence to suggest that this is not the case
- ensure that the trust board and each school's leadership team work together to monitor attendance levels and the effectiveness of this policy
- ensure that all legislation and guidance are complied with and reflected in our policies and procedures, including the DfE Attendance Guidance; [Working together to improve school attendance \(updated 2024\)](#)
- have in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who are at risk of missing education, having regard to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (please refer to our [Child Protection policy](#)).
- provide information requested by the Secretary of State, including termly absence data collected by the Department for Education and daily attendance data, and information about children on long term sick leave
- regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels including information about possible penalty notices for low attendance.
- support learners who are returning to education following long term absence
- ensure that effective systems to record and report attendance data are in place, including accurate completion of admission and attendance registers using an electronic management information system
- assign overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the School to a designated senior leader
- observe and fulfil the responsibilities set out in guidance issued by the Department for Education ([Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)) to the extent not covered above or elsewhere in this policy.

3.2 Parents and carers

We expect parents and carers to:

- ensure that their child arrives at the School on time, in the correct uniform and with the necessary equipment
- promote the importance of regular attendance at home
- follow the correct procedure for reporting the absence of their child from the School (see section 6.3 below)
- avoid unnecessary absences
- keep the School informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- not take their child out of education for holidays during term time (see section 6.3 below)
- inform the School in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren), along with the name of the parent with whom the child shall live

- observe and fulfil their responsibilities set out in the guidance issued by the Department for Education: Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk)

3.3 Learners

We expect learners to:

- attend the school regularly and on time
- be punctual to all lessons
- follow the correct procedure if they arrive to the Academy late (see sections 4 and 5 below).

3.4 Senior Attendance Champion

The Senior Attendance Champion (“SAC”) at the Academy is Samantha MacDonnell – Vice Principal

The SAC will be responsible for the strategic approach to attendance at the Academy and will

- offer a clear vision for attendance improvement
- evaluate and monitor attendance expectations and processes
- oversee attendance and absence data analysis
- ensure that key attendance messages are communicated to parents and learners
- provide data and reports to support the work of the board of trustees (see below).

3.5 The Board of Trustees

The board of trustees will:

- take an active role in attendance improvement, recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the trust, including in its ethos and policies
- ensure the Trust’s leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends and help School leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- ensure Trust staff receive adequate training on attendance, including dedicated training for staff with specific attendance responsibilities and any additional training that would help support pupils or cohorts overcome common barriers to attendance
- require the Trust’s schools to report to the trustees on their attendance at regular intervals

4 Registration & Line Up

- 4.1 The School maintains an attendance register and uses this to record each learner’s attendance at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon.

	Start time	End time
AM Line Up by	08.20 - Secondary 08.30 - Primary	08.28 – Secondary 08.35 - Primary
Registration session	08.30 - Secondary	08.40 – Secondary
Morning	08.35 - Primary	08.45 - Primary
Afternoon	12.20 – Secondary 13.00 - Primary	12.20 – Secondary 13.00 - Primary

- 4.2 Learners who arrive after the start of a registration session but before the end of the registration session will be marked as late. Learners who arrive after the end of the registration session will be marked as unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory explanation is provided and must follow the process set out in section 5 below.
- 4.3 The register is marked using the national statutory attendance and absence codes which can be found in the DfE Attendance Guidance - [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672222/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)
- 4.4 Where a learner attends a registration session but does not attend subsequent lessons, we will treat this as a truancy and non-attendance matter in accordance with the behaviour policy and engage parents where necessary.

5 Late arrival

- 5.1 If a learner arrives at the Academy after the relevant registration period has ended but within the relevant session, they must immediately go to the Academy office to sign in and provide a reason for the lateness to enable the Academy to establish the appropriate attendance or absence code. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, the register will be marked as unauthorised absence. Secondary phase learners will always receive a break time detention except in exceptional circumstances. Heavy traffic will not be treated as an exceptional circumstance. For primary phase learners, discussions will be held with the parent before further action is taken.
- 5.2 Persistent lateness will be treated as a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with in line with behaviour policy. This may include lunch detentions and after school detentions.

6 Reasons for absence and how to report or request authorisation

- 6.1 **Authorised absence** - absence will only be authorised where the Trust has given approval in advance for a learner to not be in attendance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for the absence. Only the Trust can authorise absence.
- 6.2 **Unauthorised absence** – absence will be marked as unauthorised where the Trust is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

6.3 Reporting absence from School

- 6.3.1 Where a learner is to be absent from school without prior permission, the parent/carers should inform the school the child attends by telephone on the morning of the day of the first absence and let the attendance officer know when they expect the learner to return. If the return date is not confirmed on the first day of absence, parents/carers must contact the School on each day of absence.
- 6.3.2 On the day of return to school, parents should also provide written confirmation of the reason(s) for the full period of absence.
- 6.3.3 Any unexplained absence will be followed up by school promptly.
- 6.3.4 In cases of prolonged absence due to illness, the parents/carers may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence, such as a note from the child's doctor. If this evidence is not provided, the absence may be marked as unauthorised. The Academy may also follow up with a telephone call home, a safeguarding home visit or a meeting with parents/carers.

6.4 Appointments

- 6.4.1 Medical, dental and other essential appointments for a learner should take place outside of school hours where this is reasonably possible.
- 6.4.2 Where an appointment must take place during school time, the learner should attend school for as much of the day as possible and as much prior notice as possible should be given by completing a medical form.

6.5 Leave of absence (including holidays during term time)

- 6.5.1 Parents and carers should not take learners out of education for holidays or other extended leave during term time. The academy will only authorise a leave of absence during term time where there are exceptional circumstances. Only the Principal can authorise such absences and parents must use the correct leave of absence form. The Academy will grant permission for a learner to be absent from school in the circumstances described in paragraph 37 of the DfE Attendance Guidance which can be summarised as follows:
- taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad
 - attendance at an interview for entry into another educational setting or future employment
 - study leave for public examinations
 - temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
 - other exceptional circumstances.
- 6.5.2 To request a leave of absence, parents/carers must make the request in advance and in writing and, wherever possible, at least 4 school weeks ahead of the planned leave.
- 6.5.3 Where a leave of absence is requested as above, the Head of School will consider the specific facts and circumstances relating to the request. The decision will be confirmed in writing and is solely at the Head of School's discretion and is final.
- 6.5.4 Where permission is granted, the Head of School will confirm the number of days and dates of absence which are authorised.
- 6.5.5 If permission is not granted and the parents/carers proceed to take their child out of the School, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and parents may be issued with a penalty notice or be subject to prosecution by the local authority (see section 7 below).

6.6 Religious observance

- 6.6.1 We recognise that learners of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where one day of religious observance falls during school time and has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the learner belongs, the absence from the School will be authorised.
- 6.6.2 We ask that parents/carers notify the School their child attends in writing in advance where absence is required due to religious observance.

7 Addressing poor attendance and punctuality

- 7.1 The School will use data to target attendance improvement efforts to the learners or groups of learners who need it most. In doing so, the Trust, led by the DAO, will:
- monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns, proactively using data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance

- provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and relevant leaders
- identify learners who need support from wider partners as soon as possible and deliver this support in a targeted manner
- conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and fully year data to identify patterns and trends
- benchmark Trust attendance data at each level against local, regional and national level
- monitor the impact of Trust strategies and actions to improve attendance on particular pupils and particular groups
- work with the local authority and other local partners to identify groups
- hold regular meetings with the parents or carers of learners who the Trust and/or local authority consider to be vulnerable

7.2 Our procedures for managing unexplained absences can be found at the end of this policy

7.3 Where absence or punctuality is a cause for concern, for example because there is:

- a pattern of unauthorised absence
- a question over the reasons provided for a particular absence or late arrival
- persistent truancy or lateness

we will make contact with the parents/carers with a view to working together to support improved attendance and/or punctuality.

7.4 In cases where the Trust has been unable to establish a clear reason for absence and/or has welfare concerns about the learner, a home welfare check may be carried out.

7.5 Failure to attend or arrive at lessons on time may also be dealt with as a disciplinary matter in accordance with the behaviour policy.

7.6 Absence will be classed as persistent where it falls below 90% across the academic year. Absence at this level is very likely to hinder educational prospects and we expect full parental co-operation and support to urgently address these cases. Intervention steps may include implementation of an attendance action plan, referral to other agencies and/or seeking to put in place an attendance contract.

7.7 Where out of school barriers to attendance are identified, the Trust will signpost and support access to any additional services.

7.8 Where parents/carers have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age is regularly attending the Academy and wider support in accordance with this policy is not appropriate or effective, we may consider issuing a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a financial penalty (£80 if paid within 21 days, £160 if paid within 28 days) imposed on parents which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If you take your child out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (90%) over a period of ten weeks, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local authority for consideration of a penalty notice.

7.9 When considering whether to issue a penalty notice, we will have regard to:

- the National Framework for penalty notices as set out in paragraphs 175 – 201 of the [DfE Attendance Guidance](#); and
- the [local authority's Code of Conduct](#) for issuing penalty notices.

- 7.10 In the event that a penalty notice is issued but is not paid within 28 days, the local authority will decide whether to proceed to prosecution. The local authority also has separate powers to prosecute parents if their child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly.

8 Sixth Form Attendance

- 9.1 Year 12 and 13 Learners are expected to maintain the same high standards of attendance and punctuality expected of all learners. Learner absences will be followed up in the same way and problem attendance will be addressed by the Heads of Sixth Form and the Senior Leadership Team as appropriate.

Annex 1 – Improving Attendance

Absence Procedures including First Day Contact

- It is the parents' responsibility to notify the school on the first day of absence. This should be done by telephone or reporting to the school office where the child attends. This telephone or verbal message should be confirmed in writing by the parent on the child's return to school and this will be filed. If the absence is authorised i.e. the school accepts the reasons for absence, for example, illness, a day for religious observance or an acceptable medical or special needs visit, no further action will be taken other than updating files with the reason. If the absence is unauthorised parents will be contacted and invited to the school to discuss the situation.
- If the school has not been notified by 9.30am, then a member of staff will contact the learner's home and record the outcome;
- The registers are monitored every week using Arbor (the MIS), this gives data on absences and lateness of both kinds which will enable personal tutors to follow up with individual families;
- The school's within the trust regularly informs and reminds parents of their responsibilities regarding attendance. This will usually take the form of written communications emailed to parents and carers
- Any learner arriving between the start of school and closing of registers is deemed to be late. Any learner arriving after the close of registers is deemed as unauthorised absent, though in both cases the child is included in the total attendance numbers for that session;
- Teachers are expected to total the number of learners present for quick checking in the case of an evacuation;
- Any emerging absence patterns should be discussed with the appropriate Vice Principal prior to contact being made with parents. Absences of any kind are shown on the learner's end of year report.
- The official school attendance figures are kept centrally.. Annual attendance figures are sent to the DfE. The school also publishes its own attendance figures in learners' reports and to the Governing Body.

Procedure when parent does not confirm reason for absence on the first day

Day 1 - Phone call

A staff member trained to do so, telephones the child's home after registration to seek reasons for the absence and reassurance from a parent or carer that the child is safe at home.

Response from parent	Next step from school
There is no answer at the home or on mobile numbers	Call back. Risk assess after 2 hours. Some risk assessments will require a subsequent home visit to check the child is safe and/or a referral to the MASH.
The parent/carers answered the call; the child is safe with them	Ask for reason for absence and record on the school's attendance management system
The person answering is not the parent/carers and the school is not reassured that the child is at home or safe	The school's designated lead for child protection should be consulted on a risk assessment and the degree of vulnerability of the child
The parent/carers answered the call, the child is not with them or safe and the parent is concerned	School to advise the parent to: • Contact the local police station to inform them that the child is missing • Contact all people and places the child is known to talk to and visit to tell them that the child is missing and ask if they can help to find the child, by providing information which may shed light on the child's whereabouts or actively searing for the child • Contact the family GP and Accident and Emergency Centres near where the child lives and goes to school, in case he/she has sustained an injury and been taken in for medical treatment • Report back to school if the child is found or remains missing

Day 2 - Follow up phone call

Follow up call	
Response from parent	Next step from school
There is no answer at the home or on mobile numbers	Call back. Risk assess after 2 hours. Some risk assessments will require a subsequent home visit to check the child is safe and/or a referral to the MASH. Home visits must be risk assessed

Day 3 – Write/email parents

Write or email to the parent in plain English, asking for contact to be made with the school immediately. Please give the parents/carers 3 working days to make contact and if you are aware that English may not be the parent's first language, copy the letter into a language that may be more accessible.

Response from parent	Next step from school
Parent does not reply	Risk assess. Some risk assessments will require a subsequent home visit to check the child is safe and/or a referral to the MASH.

Day 5 - Home visits

If the learner has been absent for five school days even if a reason for absence has been provided complete a risk assessment to ascertain whether a home visit is required. If no reason has been provided or the school cannot be certain about the safety/whereabouts of the learner a home visit must be completed on this day.

Day 10 – Involvement of the local authority

If there has been no contact regarding the whereabouts of the child they must be reported as missing in education at this time.

Procedure when the attendance of a learner falls below expectations

- Following weekly review of absences learner's attendance has fallen below expected – Letter is sent home to parents/carers explaining their child's attendance is not in line with expectation and that we expect to see improvements over the coming weeks. Involve the form tutor or class teacher at this stage to try and improve attendance.
- Following weekly review of absences learners attendance fails to increase – Parents/carers are invited in for a meeting to discuss attendance.
- Following weekly review of absences learner's attendance still fails to increase – Parents/carers will be asked to come in to school to complete a parent contract for attendance.
- Following weekly review of absences learner's attendance still fails to increase – AP involves the EIPT at the local authority. This team has the authority to issue penalty notices and prosecute parents/carers for poor attendance.

Rewards for good attendance

- Learners who demonstrate excellent levels of attendance receive certificates at celebration assemblies. They also receive House Points that contribute toward a rewards trip at the end of the academic year.

Procedure for Lates

- All secondary learners who arrive after line up must sign in at the school office where they will be placed on the break time detention list for that day. There are no exemptions except for exceptional circumstances. Traffic is not an exceptional circumstance
- If lateness persists parents/carers will be invited in to address this behaviour and the lateness will be dealt with in line with behaviour policy

Removing a Learner from the School Roll

Under Learner Registration Regulations, learners of a compulsory school age can be removed from roll when the following criteria:

- Learner admitted to another school, confirmation received and records requested;
- Learner moves away from area and cannot be found (school and Educational Social Worker follow procedures and complete enquiries). The learner must remain on roll until the process is completed. Removal can be backdated to the end of the first week of absence, if agreed by the Local Authority.
- Learner permanently excluded. Statutory time limit for appeal has passed or appeal has not been upheld.
- Death of the child;
- Parents indicate in writing that they are removing the child;
- Parents indicate in writing that they wish to home educate their child;
- Poor attendance is not a reason for removal of a child from roll.

Annex 2 – Child Missing from Education (CME)

- Learners who have failed to take up a school place or who have been unexpectedly absent from school for 5 or more consecutive school days are potential Children Missing Education. In order to safeguard these learners and ensure that they are able to access education, schools and other educational establishments must investigate the whereabouts of these children.
- Investigations should include attempts to make telephone contact with all family members, home visits and liaison with partner agencies such as the School Admissions Service and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) where appropriate.
- If contact is established with the family and they are still residing in Northamptonshire then the parent/carer must be notified of their legal obligations. This is initially done through a parent contract letter. This states that parents are to ensure that their child is in receipt of full time education and the matter should be pursued as an attendance concern.
- If the family have left the Northamptonshire area, details of their whereabouts must be obtained and the local authority notified so that they can support the family to access education.
- If contact cannot be established with the family and their whereabouts are unknown, a Child Missing from Education Referral Form should be completed.
- It is important that the Local Authority are notified if a learner is unexpectedly absent from school for 5 days or more and the school have been unable to contact the family.
- Learners who are absent, abscond or go missing during the school day are vulnerable and at potential risk of abuse or neglect. The school will first make contact with the parent/carer of the learner. If the whereabouts are not known then the school will contact the police and register the learner as missing.
- The school will comply with our statutory duty to inform the local authority of any learner who falls within the reporting notification requirements outlined in Children Missing Education – Statutory guidance for local authorities (DfE September 2016).
- Where child sexual exploitation or the risk of harm is suspected the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must be notified immediately and this should be logged on My Concern.
- If the DSL believes that a learner has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm or have any other child protection concerns they will contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and complete a referral.