



#AimHighSucceedBeHappy

Attendance Policy

Date agreed: December 2023

Date to be reviewed: December 2024



Good attendance at school is vital for your child's education and means they can make the most of all aspects of school life. Excellent attendance at school allows a child to have the best possible start in life.

There are lots of reasons why a child should attend school:

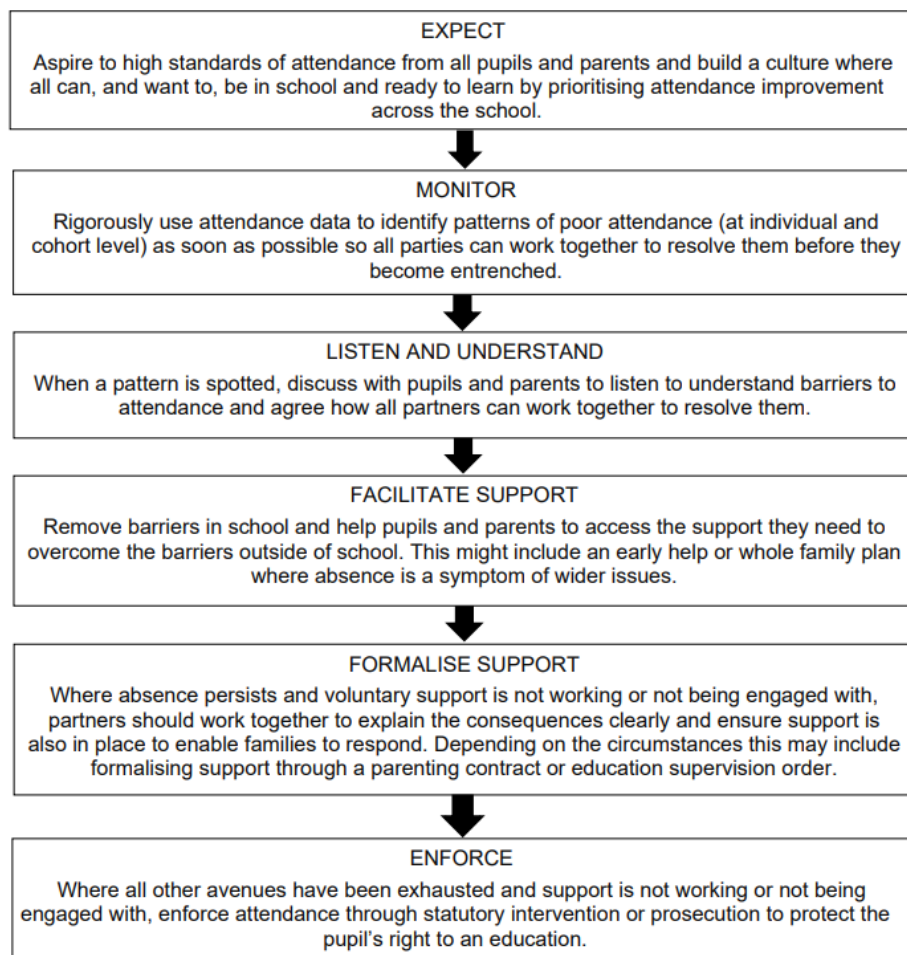
- To learn
- To build confidence and self-esteem
- To understand responsibility
- To develop new skills
- To grow as individuals
- To make new friends, have fun and develop life skills

Aims of Attendance Policy

1. To improve the overall attendance of pupils at school.
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers, and governors.
3. To develop a framework, which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
4. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
5. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
6. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
7. To promote a positive reward system for good attendance.
8. To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other services and agencies.
9. In the case of long-term illness, to recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

Principles

At West Meadows Primary School we aim to work together with our children and their families as well as other local partners to improve attendance, including identifying and removing any barriers to good attendance at home, in school or more broadly. Our aim is to work together to:



Working Together to Improve Attendance (DfE)

Our School Expectations:

Our school day starts at 8:45am and ends at 3:00pm. The school bell rings at 8:40am and we ask that all children are on the playground at this time and line up at their classroom door ready to start the day and enable a quick start to learning. Pupils arriving after registration must sign in through the main reception and provide the reason for lateness. Registers close at 9:15am after which time children are marked as absent.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, calm, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels happy, safe and secure and wants to attend, can learn and thrive. All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually. The headteacher, Miss Marsh (r.marsh@smat.org.uk), alongside the Parent Support Advisor, Mrs Maree (c.maree@smat.org.uk) are responsible for the strategic management of attendance in school and can be contacted on the above email addresses or via the school office.

We understand the significant impact that poor attendance can have on a child's outcomes, attainment and well-being and therefore place the promotion of good attendance at the heart of our work as a school.

Attendance Rewards and Incentives

As a school we offer our children rewards and incentives to encourage good attendance, including Bronze, Silver and Gold badges for termly 100% attendance and a weekly class reward for the best attending class. Attendance rewards are shared in our Celebration Assembly each week and attendance information shared weekly with children and families on our weekly newsletter. The need for regular attendance is also a subject for school assemblies.

The Role of the Parents / Carers:

Primary school children rely on their parents to make sure that they attend school. As a parent, you are legally responsible for making sure that your child gets a full-time education.

Make sure your child has good attendance:

- From starting at nursery, teach your child the importance of good attendance and getting to school on time every day
- Show an interest and ask about what they're doing at school
- Encourage them to take part in school activities
- Encourage them to tell you about any problems they may have at school - let their teacher or headteacher know about anything serious
- Don't let them take time off school for minor ailments - particularly those which would not stop you from going to work
- Where possible, make appointments after school, at weekends, or during school holidays
- Take family holidays outside of term time

Absence Procedures

Parents:

- To inform school office of the reason for absence before 9:00am via telephone
- To ensure Leave of Absence Request forms are completed before any school leave is taken. It is the responsibility of the parent to collect this from the school office before any leave of absence
- To try to book all medical and dental appointments out of school hours wherever possible and reduce the amount of time out of school for the appointment by bringing children in before and after
- Where a child needs to attend an appointment in school hours, a letter or appointment notification must be shown to the school office prior to the appointment date and arrangements made for the child's collection if necessary

School:

- Office to follow up on daily absentees with First Day phone call and record reason for absence in Arbor
- School to follow up on daily code N and conduct home visit if contact is not made
- School to follow up/conduct any 3 day absences
- PSA/HT to discuss with parents the impact of holidays taken on receipt of Leave of Absence Request form. Letter sent to all families responding to Leave of Absence request
- School to have initial telephone meeting with the parents of all children who fall below 96% to ensure early support is provided
- School to hold meetings with parents of persistent absences and / or below 90%
- School to monitor attendance after meeting, including EHA to be considered if attendance continues to be a concern or referral to EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) or other provision to address individual needs of the pupil (e.g. meet and greets, SEN support, support from external agencies)

- School to review attendance data weekly to identify children and families who may require support from our Parent Support Advisor or other members of the school team. Half termly data analysis will be carried out to identify any times, groups or trends over time that can inform future practice and actions.

Lates

- School starts at 8:45am. Children will be marked as late after this time
- Register closes at 9:15am after which time children will be marked as absent
- Late arrivals to be monitored weekly
- Persistent lates will receive an initial phone call home
- If number of lates does not improve, a meeting with parents and Senior Leadership Team will be held including EHA to be considered and/or referral to EWO

Unauthorised Absence

In law an offence occurs if a parent/carer or person with parental responsibility fails to secure a child's attendance at the school at which they are a registered pupil, and that absence is not authorised by the school. The Education Welfare Service delivers the service of issuing penalty notices on behalf of the Local Authority.

If a child has 10 sessions (5 days) or more of unauthorised absences in a term parents/carers may be liable to a Fixed Penalty Notice for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. School strongly believes that if children are to get the greatest benefit from their education, good attendance and punctuality are imperative. School will do all that we can to encourage and support children, parents, and carers to achieve/fulfil their expectations. Please do not hesitate to contact the school office for further advice and assistance if required.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

No parent can demand leave of absence for the purposes of a holiday as a right. Any request for leave must be made in advance. Any leave of absence in exceptional circumstances cannot be authorised retrospectively. The request should be made by the parent "with whom the pupil normally resides". If this is the parent who is not requesting leave of absence then the full name, address and email address of the parent doing so MUST be provided on the form. Forms are available from the school office. If any leave of absence is taken, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued unless exceptional circumstances are agreed with the headteacher in advance. If a leave of absence is planned to visit family members living overseas, possibly for extended periods of time, parents should seek advice from the Head teacher.

Internal Attendance Panel

Early intervention is seen as essential. Where a child has persistent and regular periods of both authorised and unauthorised absence leading to attendance of less than 90% then the parents/guardians are notified through a school warning letter. Attendance is monitored closely and if after 4 weeks attendance has not improved then a second letter is sent to parents. Consideration is then given whether to invite parents to attend an internal school attendance panel, which consists of the Headteacher and PSA. The aim of this panel is to raise parental awareness of their child's attendance and stress the need for their child to attend regularly if they are to take advantage of the education on offer. The panel also gives parents the opportunity to explain why their child has been absent and request any support. It is hoped that through this early intervention the need for formal procedures can be avoided. Where there has been no significant improvement in attendance, formal procedures (as detailed above) will then be taken, as by law, parents are required to send their child to school on a regular basis.

Long term Illness

The school will recognise the needs of individual pupils when planning integration following significant periods of absence due to illness. We will:

- Be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning pupils
- Involve / inform all staff in the reintegration process
- Provide opportunities for counselling and feedback
- Consider peer support and mentoring
- Involve parents as far as possible including through regular meetings
- Agree timescale for review or reintegration plan
- Include any necessary external agencies/partners, parents and pupils in the reintegration plan