



**PORTICO**  
ACADEMY TRUST

opening doors, unlocking potential

## Attendance Policy

**Date Written/Reviewed:** ..... March 2025  
**Next Review Date:** ..... March 2028  
**Person Responsible:** ..... M Aggus



## Introduction

West Leigh Junior School values all its pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and punctuality and give appropriate support to resolve any difficulties.

There is a strong correlation between the amount of absence from school and the attainment of pupils. Every lesson in school matters and children who have regular absences tend to find it difficult to catch up. Regular absence can limit a child's future opportunities and set up bad habits for work and life.

## Inclusion

All children deserve to thrive academically and socially. At West Leigh Junior School we adapt our curriculum to ensure it is accessible to meet different needs and high expectations are maintained for all. Inclusion runs through everything we do; it is not a bolt on. We are a community school which strongly believes that we have a duty to provide for the varying needs of our children in order to ensure that they are ready for the next stage of education and beyond.

We have high expectations of **all our pupils**. We firmly believe that with high quality teaching and effective engagement from parents **every child** can meet their academic potential. We are also passionate about the children's social and emotional development and believe that all children should be offered opportunities to ensure that they leave our school with high aspirations for their future.

We believe that all our children have an equal entitlement, and should have an equal opportunity to be supported and challenged to maximise their potential, therefore our curriculum is bespoke and allows children to make progress in a variety of ways.

**Every child** within our school can thrive and we do everything we can to make sure that happens. That means we:

- provide lessons that meet the needs of every child;
- make reasonable adjustments to lessons and our school environment;
- provide staff training to expand our expertise.

We think about both the long term and the short term. Our ambitions for our children include for them to:

- have personal, spiritual, moral and cultural awareness to learn and achieve;
- have good friendships and relationships;
- live a healthy and independent life;
- be successful in work;
- feel safe and secure.

## Legal Framework

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable for their age and ability.

The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents/carers secure education for children of compulsory age and where necessary, use legal enforcement. The Education Regulations 2006 requires our school to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning and then again at the start of the afternoon session.

## Categorising Absences

The registers must record whether the pupil was:

- present;

- absent;
- present at an approved educational/sporting activity, representing the school;
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Registers must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by the parent/carer. All absences will be recorded as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation, with evidence, for a pupil's absence has been received.

**Authorised absences** are mornings and/or afternoons away from school for reasons such as illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable. For example:

- absences which have not been properly explained;
- shopping trips or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays other than in exceptional circumstances.

#### Absence Procedures

Parents/carers are requested to:

- contact the school before 9.30am on the first day of illness;
- keep the school informed of longer term illness by contacting every 48hrs thereafter.

Parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness or medical appointments. This may be in the form of a letter, an appointment card, prescription or doctor's note, or text message or email from a professional etc.

#### Leave of Absence

Current law does not give any entitlement to parents/carers to take their child out of school during term time. The Education Regulations 2013 prohibits the principal from granting any leave of absence during term time unless there are '**exceptional circumstances**'.

Parents/carers will be asked to complete a '**Leave of Absence Form**' at least one month before any leave is required, with supporting evidence identifying why the leave has been requested.

A letter will be sent out with the decision made regarding the absence. If the leave of absence is not authorised, the letter will include a warning that a penalty notice may be issued if the leave is taken.

**Penalty Notices can be issued if:**

- **there have been 10 sessions (5 consecutive days) or more of unauthorised absence due to leave taken during an academic year, within a rolling 10 school week period.**

**The school will contact the attendance legal intervention team at the Local Authority, who will decide whether to issue a penalty notice:**

- **the first offence will incur a £160 penalty notice per parent, per child if paid within 28 days of receipt of notice, reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days;**
- **the second offence (within 3 years) will incur a penalty notice of £160 – per parent, per child;**
- **a third offence (within 3 years) will be presented to the Magistrate's court. Successful prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500.**

#### Attendance Interventions

Pupils with attendance between 95% and 90% attendance:

- attendance will be closely monitored on a weekly basis by the school attendance officer;
- letters or emails may be sent to parents if patterns of absence occur.

**This action is rated Level 1**

Pupils with attendance less than 90%:

- the parent will be notified via email or letter;
- if deemed necessary, parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting in school with the Principal and/or attendance officer.

**This action is rated Level 2**

- parents/carers may be requested to complete a parenting contract which will state that they agree to comply with specific requirements. The school will agree to provide the support needed to enable a parent/carer to comply;
- parents/carers will be informed that no further absence will be authorised without supporting medical evidence;
- if this is not adhered to, the Local Authority Attendance Officer will become involved and can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or Prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

**This action is rated level 3 and 4**

Pupils with regular lateness:

- letters to parents may be sent if punctuality/lateness becomes regular or reaches a large amount of schooling being missed;
- a meeting may be arranged with the school attendance officer and principal if this persists.

Admissions

***Children Missing from Education (CME)***

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have are entitled to a full-time education. Our school recognises that a child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and will follow the school procedures for unauthorised absence and for children missing education. It is also recognised that, when not in school, children may be vulnerable to or exposed to other risks. This aspect also includes those pupils who are absent from education particularly on repeated occasions or for prolonged periods of time. We work with parents and other partners to keep children in school whenever possible. Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency (Missing Education and Child Employment Service, Social Care or Police). Parents are required to provide at least two emergency contact numbers to the school, to enable us to communicate with someone if we need to.

Our school complies with 'Children Missing Education' (DfE September 2016), and 'Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Early Help and Family Support Children Missing Education Guidance' (January 2019). Our school must inform the Local Authority of any pupil who has been absent for a continuous period of 10 days or more without a good reason, and the school has satisfied all avenues of enquiry and is unsuccessful tracing the pupil.

***Pupil Does not Attend School on the Expected Admission Start Date***

If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, we will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts. Where the whereabouts are unknown and we have not been notified that the child has started at an alternative setting, we must raise a CME referral to the local authority at the earliest opportunity. Where the whereabouts are known and the parent is refusing to send the child to school, we will follow up using our usual school attendance processes.

***Moving Abroad***

Where a parent notifies a school that their family are going to move abroad, it is essential that the school takes effective safeguarding steps to ensure that the information that has been received is a true record of what the family intend to do. The principal will meet with the family and establish key information (using the CME Southend guidance).

If, after 10 days from leaving the school and a notification has not been received from the onward destination school after making enquiries with the parents, a CME referral will be made to the local authority where checks will be completed.

### ***EHE***

Our school also complies with the regulations regarding Elective Home Education (Regulation 12 of the 'Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006' as amended 2016) and Southend's guidance <http://www.southendlearningnetwork.co.uk/Services/4834>. Our school notifies the Elective Home Education Team via secure email to [ehe@southend.gov.uk](mailto:ehe@southend.gov.uk) at the earliest opportunity and, when relevant, immediately provides a copy of the parents' written notification to home educate and the date they came off roll. A deregistration form is completed before removing the child from roll.

### Roles and Responsibilities

West Leigh Junior School believes that improved attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, trustees, parents/carers and the pupils.

As such the trustees will:

- review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy;
- identify a trustee to lead on attendance matters;
- monitor the school's attendance through termly reporting at trustee meetings;
- ensure there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence to identify vulnerable groups;
- ensure data is understood and used to devise solutions and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- actively promote the importance and value good attendance and punctuality to pupils and their parents/carers;
- ensure there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance: with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve;
- monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually;
- report school attendance data termly to trustees;
- ensure attendance data is collected and analysed regularly to identify causes and patterns of absence.

All staff will:

- actively promote the importance and value good attendance and punctuality to pupils and their parents/carers;
- contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance: with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve;
- comply with Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation;
- contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and intervention.

The parents/carers will:

- instil the value of education, regular attendance and punctuation within the home environment;
- contact the school if their child is absent to let us know the reason for the absence;
- try to avoid unnecessary absences by making appointments outside of the school day;
- ask the school for help if a child is experiencing difficulties;

- encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing the school bag and uniform the evening before;
- avoid taking the child on holiday during term-time. Where this is unavoidable, before booking the holiday, complete and submit a leave of absence form to the principal, who will consider whether the absence can be authorised.

The pupils will:

- be punctual for school and ready to learn;
- be prepared for the whole school day in terms of equipment needed, for example, swimming kit, P.E. kit, pencil, ruler etc.

West Leigh Junior School has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and promote attendance. Equally parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils in the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.