

Attendance Policy

Weaverham High School



Approved by: Governing Body

Date: 26th February 2025

Last reviewed on: January 2025

Next review due by: January 2026

Attendance Policy Statement:

Our aim at Weaverham High School is for every pupil is to aspire to being the best version of themselves. For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and arrive at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Weaverham High School has a duty to publish its absence and late figures to parents to promote attendance, we may also contact partner agencies where appropriate. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their child attends.

Good attendance will be seen as an achievement, recognised as such by Weaverham High School. This attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

1. Why regular attendance is important:

Good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills, which will prepare them for life. It is important to ensure that our most vulnerable pupils are given the same opportunities, which may mean extra support in certain cases.

A pupil may be at risk of harm if he or she does not attend school regularly. Failing to attend school on a regular basis, depending on the circumstances, may be considered a safeguarding matter.

The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parent(s)/carer(s), local community and the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

2. Legislation

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.
- Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 states that 'if a child of compulsory school age who is registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent is guilty of an offence'.
- Section 576 Education Act 1996 - Meaning of "parent"

For the purposes of Education Law, the definition of a 'parent' and who is responsible for ensuring regular attendance to school is:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person. This could be one parent, both parents and/or carer/s.

Therefore, regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement. Additionally, regular attendance is essential to enable children to maximise their educational attainment, opportunities, and further development.

[Education Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on the local authorities and governing bodies to have regarded the guidance issued by the Secretary of State regarding safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

[Education Act 2002 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

3. Procedure - Registers

Registers provide the daily record of attendance of all pupils. They are legal documents, and we are required to complete them every morning and afternoon.

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Pupils are expected to attend school daily when the school setting is open unless there is an acceptable reason for absence. Every half- day absence must be classified by the school, there are two types of absence:

- Authorised (where the school approves a pupil's absence).
- Unauthorised (where the school will not approve the absence)

The school has a duty of care to safeguard all its pupils. If a child is absent, the parents/carers should inform school on the first day of absence, and any subsequent days of absence, stating the reason.

This can be done via email at:

office@weaverhamhighschool.com

Or phone:

01606 852120 option 1.

The name of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school is Richard Harris, Deputy Headteacher.

- **Registration**
Morning and afternoon registration (am and pm) is administered using an electronic registration system. Teachers must ensure that registration takes place and is saved within the registration period. If it is impossible to complete the register electronically then they must complete a paper registration sheet. The morning and afternoon registration constitutes the legal register and may be required in a court of law.
- **Lesson monitoring**

Attendance to lessons is monitored through 'Classcharts'. Staff are required to electronically take the register at the beginning of each lesson and ensure that it is saved.

- **Absence Explanation**

Parents are expected to provide the school with an explanation for any absence of a child on the first and every subsequent day of absence. They can communicate this to the school through e-mail, telephone call or personal appearance. Explanations of absence should be passed immediately to the office staff who will record the reason in the register and discuss any missing explanations with parents/carers. If the reasons for absence are not clear medical evidence may be requested.

4. What can parents/carers do to help and working in partnership with Parents/ Carers?

Let the school know straight away why your child is absent. Home/school communication is extremely important in supporting your child to achieve and feel settled in school. Try to make any dental/GP appointments outside of school time.

It is important that school and parents / carers work together with a shared plan and outcomes when supporting a child / young person's attendance and wellbeing. If despite persistent attempts to work with parents, there continues to be a lack of engagement, then legal procedures may be followed to secure engagement and school attendance.

As a school we recognise that building respectful relationships with families and working in collaboration is essential to ensuring the best outcomes for children / young people. We require all parents to actively support the work of the school, including promoting attendance and engagement. We are committed to ensuring that systems and processes are in place with regards to promoting attendance and would encourage parents to make contact if they have concerns about their child.

We will provide parents / carers with information about Emotionally Based School Non-attendance to discuss needs and strategies to support their child, as appropriate.

5. Absence Monitoring

School robustly monitor and analyse attendance data to promptly identify and address possible concerns and allow for early interventions to support the child/family's underlying needs. This will include –

- Weekly attendance code analysis
- Specific cohort and group monitoring – particularly for vulnerable groups
- Monitoring of lesson attendance across all subjects
- 'Welcome back' check-ins for pupils that have been absent for 5 days – to check wellbeing and ensure there are no ongoing needs that will impact on attendance.
- The school's strategy for using data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most.
- The school's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence, including how access to wider support services will be provided to remove the barriers to attendance and when support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority.

6. Early Identification and Intervention: assess, plan, do and review

Every pupil has a right to a full-time education and Weaverham High School sets high attendance expectations for all pupils. Weaverham High School will consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance and will consider our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

For any child / child person who is absent from school it is essential to fully understand the reasons for this so that targeted, evidence-based interventions and support can be put into place. All staff have a part to play in promoting attendance. We recognise the importance of ensuring that key members of staff from across the school, including Form Tutors, attendance, pastoral and SEND staff work in collaboration to consider and identify the holistic needs of the child/young person and to overcome barriers to attendance. In accordance with the principles of early intervention, a graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review will be followed utilising a range of school-based resources, evidence-based interventions and seeking advice and support from external services at an appropriate stage, when needed.

Appropriate assessments will be important to help understand the underlying reasons that may be contributing to attendance difficulties. This may be an assessment that focuses on the individual child's needs such as an SDQ, SEND assessments and wellbeing assessments or may include the holistic needs of the family, such as a TAF assessment. Assessments will include the views of the child/young person as well as parents/carers, and identify strengths (what is working well) and needs (what is working less well).

Assessments undertaken may identify that a child/young person is experiencing underlying emotional based needs that are contributing to non-attendance. Weaverham High School use the Cheshire West and Chester Council guidance for schools - Emotionally Based School Non-attendance: Good practice guidance for schools. This is a whole school framework with a graduated approach to support the early identification and intervention of children/young people who may struggle to cope in school/attend school.

Information from assessments will inform a SMART action plan with focussed targets developed in partnership with families, and other services as appropriate. For example, Early Help and Prevention and Social Care may have a part to play in the delivery of support and intervention to promote engagement and attendance. SMART plans should be personalised to effectively meet a child / young person's needs and improve attendance and wellbeing outcomes.

Regular reviews of support and attendance plans are essential to monitor the impact of interventions and to adjust these accordingly. If, despite targeted support and intervention, attendance and wellbeing concerns persist, we may seek further advice and support from external services including mental health services, specialist teaching and education services.

7. Medical Absence

Absence due to illness should be reported to the school by phone or email on the first day of absence and any subsequent days. School will contact parents during the first day if no satisfactory reason for absence has been received. The school will ask about the child's symptoms in order to record their absence accurately.

In the majority of cases, a parent's notification that their child is ill can be accepted without question or concern.

Where there is a genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, medical evidence may be requested to support the absence. In instances of long-term or repeated absences for the same reason, however, seeking medical evidence may be appropriate to assist in assessing whether the child requires additional support to help them to attend more regularly, and whether the illness is likely to prevent the child from attending for extended periods. If a parent proactively seeks out a note from a GP, it does not imply a need for absence unless this is explicit in their letter.

If a medical absence is likely to be ongoing or long term, then we will offer support in accordance with the school's policies and statutory guidance relating to Children with health needs.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>.

As a school we need to plan how children can access Education and how and when the child will return to school. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 the school will also demonstrate that reasonable adjustments are made to meet child's Educational Needs.

For children who have a medical condition and cannot attend school, the school will refer to the Cheshire West and Chester Council's Medical Needs Team.

<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/education-and-learning/medical-needs-service/medical-needs-policy-latest.pdf>

Their policy states that referrals must come directly from the child's school and must be supported by medical evidence from one of the following health professionals:

- consultant paediatrician or adolescent psychiatrist
- consultant child psychiatrist
- hospital consultant

Supporting evidence from a General Practitioner alone cannot be accepted.

As from 19th August 2024 schools must make a sickness return to the Local Authority and provide the full name and address of all pupils who have been recorded with the code I (Illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe they will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. This is to help the school and Local Authority to agree any provisions needed to ensure continuity of education of pupils who cannot attend because of health needs, in line with the statutory guidance on Education for Children with health needs: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school>

8. Lateness and Punctuality

At Weaverham High School we will apply a robust day to day process to track and follow up on absence and poor punctuality. We will ensure registers are completed accurately and on time, twice per day, in accordance with the timings set out below. This will indicate which pupils are absent from or are late for school.

- Our gates open at 7am The morning bell rings at 8.27am giving students 3 minutes to get into lesson 1.
- We expect all pupils to be in their classroom by 8.30am ready for registration. If your child is in class at this time, they will be marked as present.
- Registers close at 9.00am. If your child arrives at school after 8.30am but before 9.00am, they will need to enter the school by the pedestrian entrance and proceed directly to lesson 1 where they will be marked as late and will receive an L code.

- If your child arrives at school after the registers have closed **at 9.00am**, they will be marked as late and will receive the **U code**. This is an unauthorised absence for that session.
- Afternoon registers will be taken at **12.20**.

In accordance with the 'Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006', if your child arrives after the registers close, they will receive a mark, code U, that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice or other legal action if the problem persists.

Children who are consistently late for school are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of other children. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, you will be invited to a meeting to resolve the issues. If there is no improvement following this meeting, further action will be taken which may include referral to external agencies.

You may approach the school at any time for support and advice if you are having difficulty getting your child to school on time or maintaining regular attendance.

9. Unauthorised Absence and Fixed Penalty Notice

An absence may be coded as 'unauthorised' if:

- i. no reason for absence has been given
- ii. medical evidence is not received when requested
- iii. a request for a leave of absence has been unauthorised
- iv. a pupil arrives at school after registration has closed at 9.00am.

Parents/carers should be aware that Weaverham High School may contact the Local Authority if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 10 week rolling period with a view to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice or other legal action.

The first penalty notice issued to the parent for that pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days. Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second notice is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. A third penalty notice must not be issued within a 3 year period. Therefore, in cases where the threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) times within those 3 years, a penalty notice cannot be issued and alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, and the school will be guided by Cheshire West and Chester Local Authority. See Appendix 1 - Code of Conduct for Education Fixed Penalty Notice (Unauthorised Leave of Absence & Irregular Attendance)

10. Promoting and Incentivising Attendance

Weaverham High School recognise that promoting good attendance is not a discrete piece of work but rather it is an integral part of the school's ethos and culture.

At Weaverham High School we understand that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school. Therefore, it is important that attendance is recognised, celebrated and held in high regard. Improved attendance or improved punctuality should be recognised and praised, as well as 100% attendance. Every child has the right to feel they can achieve and be successful, so rewards and incentive strategies will be

inclusive of those with children with additional needs. Pupils will be taught about the positive link between attendance and high achievement through assemblies and Tutor Time.

11. Application for Exceptional Circumstances

As of 19th August 2024, the law ceases to include a leave of absence for a family holiday. A leave of absence can not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance. Head Teachers are only empowered to approve a leave of absence when it is requested in advance by the parent or carer with whom the child resides and when circumstances of the requested leave are 'exceptional'.

The Head Teacher and the Governing Body will determine what constitutes an exceptional circumstance on an individual basis. If parents/carers need to request Exceptional Leave of Absence, they must complete an 'Exceptional Leave of Absence' form available from the school office. It should be noted that if any application is declined and absence occurs of a consecutive 5 or more unauthorised days, then school may apply to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued to **each parent/carers**.

The following will **not** be deemed to be exceptional circumstances:

- Family holiday
- Availability of less expensive holiday
- Availability of holiday accommodation
- Parent/carers' working commitments
- Holiday pre-booked by another family member

A child's absence during term time seriously disrupts their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching on the days they are away but are less prepared for the lessons building on that teaching when they return to school. There is a consequent risk of under achievement, which we must seek to avoid. The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring any attendance issues are dealt with in line with school policy.

12. Religious Observance

We recognise that some pupils may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where a day of religious observance.

- falls during school time and
- has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil belongs

We ask that parents/carers notify us in writing in advance where absence is required due to a religious observance.

13. Enforced School Closure

If Weaverham High School was forced to close for a period of time, we have the facility to operate an online virtual school. The expectation is children will still engage with ALL activities when work is set. Procedures for online learning will be sent to parents as and when required.

ii. Impact

All pupils will achieve well by developing knowledge and skills on their journey through school. Due to robust monitoring of attendance, all pupils, including vulnerable children and children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), will have fair and equitable access to school in order to achieve the best possible outcomes. Pupils will leave Weaverham High School ready for a successful transition to further education or employment.

Appendix 1

Cheshire West & Chester

Code of Conduct for Education Fixed Penalty Notice (Unauthorised Leave of Absence & Irregular Attendance)

1. A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
2. The first penalty notice issued to each parent for that pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days.
3. Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parents for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second notice is charged at a flat rate of £160 per parent, per pupil if paid within 28 days.
4. A third penalty notice must not be issued within a 3 year period. Therefore, in cases where the threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) times within those 3 years, a penalty notice cannot be issued and alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.
5. A FPN may be issued per parent per child.
6. Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if:
 - Unauthorised absences of at least 10 consecutive school sessions (five school days).
 - Sessions either side of a weekend or school holiday will be counted as consecutive school days.
 - For poorly attending learners, at least 10 sessions (five school days) lost due to unauthorised absence in line with the new national rolling threshold of 10 sessions in 10 weeks. These do not need to be consecutive.
 - For poorly attending learners, persistent late arrival at school where there are at least 10 sessions in 10 weeks.
 - The presence of an excluded child in a public place in the child's first five days of exclusion (*N.B. points 2 to 4 do not apply where a FPN is issued for an excluded pupil in a public place.*)
7. The school must notify parents of the Attendance Policy and clearly state that parents may receive an FPN for an unauthorised leave of absence relating to holiday in term time.
8. Schools and the Education Welfare Services will take into account any exceptional circumstances when determining whether to issue a FPN.

Appendix 2

What does 'percentage attendance' mean?

Parents/carers should be advised that from September 2015 the Government have categorised those pupils who have attendance of 90% and below as 'Persistent Absence' pupils (P.A.). RSA will be specifically targeting this cohort of pupils, in an effort to improve their attendance in the future. The table below shows the learning time lost against percentage attendance figures.

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent Days	Equivalent Sessions	Equivalent Weeks	Equivalent Lessons Missed
95%	9 Days	18 Sessions	1.4 Weeks	45 Lessons
90%	19 Days	38 Sessions	3.4 Weeks	95 Lessons
85%	29 Days	58 Sessions	5.4 Weeks	145 Lessons
80%	36 Days	72 Sessions	7.1 Weeks	180 Lessons
75%	48 Days	96 Sessions	9.3 Weeks	240 Lessons

Appendix 3 - Absence Codes: According to the DfE guidance the following codes are used on the register. New Attendance Codes from 19th August 2024

Attending a place other than the school.

These codes are classified for statistical purposes as attending an approved educational activity.

Code K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
Code V	Attending an educational visit or trip
Code P	Participating in a sporting activity
Code W	Attending work experience
Code B	Attending any other approved educational activity
Code D	Dual registered at another school (this code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance)

Absent leave of absence - These codes are classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Code C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
Code M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
Code J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
Code S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
Code X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Code C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
Code C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

Absent - other authorised reasons - These codes are classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Code T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
Code R	Religious observance
Code I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)

Code E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
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Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause. - These codes are classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance

Code Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Code Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Code Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Code Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Code Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Code Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Code Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Code Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Absent - unauthorised absence - These codes are classified for statistical purposes as unauthorised absence.

Code G	Leave of absence not granted by the school
Code N	Reason for absence not yet established
Code O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
Code U	Arrived in school after registration closed