

Wellbrook School: Attendance Policy



WELLBROOK
SCHOOL

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Policy Statement

At Wellbrook School, we strive to provide every child with the opportunity to unlock their potential. We honour and celebrate their individuality and tailor our instruction to their personal needs. Our goal is to nurture self-confidence and provide students with the support necessary to help them reach heights they didn't think were possible. We want parents to imagine the possibilities when they walk through our doors and be filled with hope as they see their children achieve beyond their expectations. We strive to be a place where children feel they belong and can thrive.

Regular attendance is a pre-requisite to fulfilling this aim. Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves them vulnerable to falling behind. Those with poor attendance tend to achieve less.

Legal Framework

- The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have.
- According to Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, it is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.
- According to statutory DfE guidance ["Working Together To Improve School Attendance"](#), this means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.
- Section 444, of the Education Act 1996, further states that: "The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable in law.
- According to the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, the proprietor must ensure that two school registers are kept, one for attendance

and one for admissions, that both registers must be backed up monthly, that records should be kept for 6 years.

- The same regulation requires the proprietor of a school to make a return to the local authority (an “attendance return”) giving the full name and address of every registered pupil of compulsory school age who is not a boarder and who, since the last time an attendance return was made:
 - has failed to attend the school regularly,
 - has been absent from the school for a continuous period of at least ten school days
 - is absent due to illness and there are grounds to believe that they will be unable to attend because of sickness for at least 15 consecutive school days/ will be or will have been unable to attend because of sickness for a total of at least 15 school days during the school year, whether consecutive or not

Our Aims

- At Wellbrook School we believe that, if pupils are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance is crucial. Therefore, we are committed to ensuring that school is somewhere pupils want to be. We will provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils can access an engaging curriculum and achieve. Our school will actively promote and encourage excellent attendance for all our pupils.
- Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents, carers, and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.
- If there are problems which affect a pupil’s attendance we will investigate, identify, and work in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at the pupil resuming full attendance and consistent punctuality.
- We understand that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school therefore at all stages of improving attendance, we will work in partnership with pupils and parents collaboratively to remove any barriers to attendance. We will build strong and trusting relationships and work together to put the right support in place

Expectations of pupils

- At Wellbrook school, we expect all pupils to attend school regularly and maintain a good level of attendance. A good level of attendance is **95% and above**. Pupils will be encouraged and supported by staff to attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.
- We also expect pupils to continuously improve their attendance.
- We understand that some pupils, at the point of admission will have had a poor record of attendance or even significant gaps in their education. In those cases, we will work collaboratively with the pupil, parents and other partners to support pupils to build up their attendance record so that they attend regularly and maintain a good level of attendance.
- We also expect pupils to turn up to school on time, arriving before registration begins at 8:45am until 9am. Any student arriving after 9am will be marked late. Any student arriving after 9.30am will be marked as a unauthorised absence.
- Pupils are also expected to turn up for lessons on time according to the timetable.
- Staff will explain these expectations during the referral and induction process. They will regularly remind pupils of these expectations during assemblies, tutor time and other opportunities during their time at school.

Expectations of Parents

- At Wellbrook School we expect parents to ensure that their child attends school regularly and maintains a good level of attendance. A good level of attendance is **95% and above**. Parents should encourage and support their child to attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.
- If, at the time of admission to the school, their child has had a poor attendance record or has been out of education for a significant period of time, parents are expected to let school staff know. Staff will discuss with parents, the barriers that have stopped pupils attending education as a starting point towards working together to resolve them.

- Parents are expected to support and encourage their children to leave the home in time to arrive at school on time, before registration begins at 8:45am
- Parents are also expected to:
 - Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness). They should call the school: 01283 753 499 and inform the Administrator of the reason for the unexpected absence.
 - Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance. Leave of absence should be requested in writing. Send an email to the Headteacher at: c.howells@wellbrookschoo.co.uk.
 - Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
 - Notify the school when they require detailed support with their child's attendance. They should send an email to the school's Administrator at: admin@wellbrookschoo.co.uk. The Administrator will hand over the matter to the child's Key Worker.
- Staff will explain these expectations during the referral and induction process. They will regularly remind parents of these expectations through newsletters, or, if their child's attendance is not good through phone calls, letters, home visits as needed.

Information for parents

In addition to the expectations outlined above, we will provide parents with additional information to make sure that they understand the importance of good attendance and the school's procedures.

- We will illustrate clearly in terms of days missed what attendances percentages mean as shown below:

| Attendance | Absence and days of learning missed |
|------------|---|
| 100% | No days missed |
| 95% | 9 days of absence, 1 week and 4 days of learning missed |
| 90% | 19 days of absence, 3 weeks and 4 days of learning missed |
| 85% | 28 days of absence, 5 weeks and 3 days of learning missed |

- We will make clear what we mean by authorised and unauthorised absence - **Authorised absence** is any absence that is approved by the headteacher. These absences will be marked in the attendance register with an authorised absence

code. **Unauthorised absence** is any absence that is not approved by the headteacher including:

- absence for which a parent has not provided a reason
 - absence where the reason provided has not been accepted as justifiable or genuine by the headteacher
 - if your child arrives late after the close of register
- We will make it clear that the Headteacher is not allowed to approve any leave of absence during term time (including holidays) unless in exceptional circumstances.
- We will make it clear that - As a parent, you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure your child attends regularly - even if they are missing school without your knowledge. If the school believes this is the case, they can ask us to take action against you. This can be through a penalty notice fine or prosecution in a magistrates' court.
- We will make clear the reasons for which a penalty notice can be issued. These are:
 - if leave is taken during term time without the permission of the headteacher
 - if a child has unauthorised absence from school and their parent fails to improve the situation
 - if a child persistently arrives late after the close of register
 - if a child who has been excluded is seen in a public place during school hours without adult supervision

Our Senior Attendance Champion

Name: C. Howells

Email address: c.howells@wellbrookschoo.co.uk

Our Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for championing and improving attendance in school and liaising with pupils, parents and external agencies where needed. They will:

- set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff
- have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school

- regularly monitor attendance for the whole school, groups of pupils, individual pupils. Whole school attendance will be compared to national benchmarks and to similar schools within the school's local area. They will evaluate improvements, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes.

How we will encourage good attendance

- We will promote the benefits of good attendance when we speak to pupils and parents about expectations
- We will ensure that the school is a calm and safe space for pupils by implementing our behaviour and anti-bullying policies effectively. Pupils will have high quality pastoral support and access to the necessary provision required to ensure their mental health and well-being.
- We will ensure that our staff are suitably equipped to meet special educational needs of our pupils so they can successfully engage with the curriculum
- Our curriculum will be designed carefully to meet pupils needs, support their progress and include activities that are sufficiently engaging.
- We will use all the resources at our disposal to encourage good attendance and support pupils to improve their attendance.
- We will celebrate good attendance and pupils' improvements in attendance regularly through assemblies, tutor time announcements, weekly keyworker communications (Wellbrook Weekly) and half-termly attendance certificates.
- We will work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed.

How we will manage attendance on a day-to-day basis

- We will ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration regulations and associated education law. They will promote positive staff attitudes and support to pupils returning after absence,
- The Administrator will complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and during the afternoon session, using the relevant absence and attendance codes outlined in the DfE's ["Working Together To Improve School Attendance"](#), – see appendix 1. They will mark the morning register as pupils arrive in the morning and use staff classroom registers from the first session after the lunch break to mark the register in the afternoon.

- When parents call the school to inform staff that their child cannot turn up for school, the Administrator will ask for the reason behind the unexpected absence and record it on the register using the relevant codes.
- The Administrator will call the home of any pupils who by 10am have not turned up to school. They will ask about the reason the pupil has not turned up and find out if there is something the school can do to help get them get to school. They will remind parents that they need to inform the school as soon as possible when their child cannot turn up to school. If the parent is not available, the administrator will leave a standard message:
 - Reminding the parent that they need to inform the school as soon as possible when their child cannot turn up to school
 - asking the parent to call the school to give the reason the pupil has not turned up
- The Administrator will call the home everyday the pupil is absent for 3 consecutive days before moving onto the next stage. They will also send standard text messages to parents of pupils who are absent – the Senior Attendance Officer will provide a schedule of messages to send (examples can be seen on Appendix 2)
- The Administrator will send letter 1 to parents (see Appendix 3) via post or email on the 4th consecutive day of absence. The letter reminds them of the importance of a good attendance and invites them to call or visit the school to speak to their child's Class Tutor about how we can work together to support their child to get back to school.
- The Senior Attendance Officer will contact the local authority's Education Welfare Officer to follow up absence if no response is received after 5 days of absence and refer to the family social worker if there are additional concerns regarding the family and no contact can be made with the parent. Where there are safeguarding or similar concerns regarding the pupil/family additional services should be contacted immediately if the school is unable to contact the family. (e.g., social care, strengthening families)
- The Administrator will also send letter 2 (see Appendix 4) via post or email on the 7th consecutive day of absence inviting them to a meeting with the School Attendance Champion

- The School Attendance Champion will meet with parents who have been invited to discuss their child's attendance. The meeting will take place at least 7 days after the day letter 2 is sent.
- If the Administrator does not hear back from the parent and is therefore unable to arrange a meeting – they will inform the School Attendance Champion who will organise a visit to the home.
- The School Attendance Champion will work together with parents, developing individualised strategies for improving the attendance of pupils. They will access wider support services to support pupils and parents to help remove the barriers for attendance. Detailed records of all actions to reduce persistent and severe attendance will be kept.
- The School Attendance Champion will review, on a weekly basis, the impact of actions taken to improve attendance and make adjustments accordingly.
- The School Attendance Champion will contact the Local Authority to discuss moving onto the "Penalty Notice" stage when all reasonable efforts have been exhausted, the child continues to have unauthorised absence from school and their parents have not managed to improve the situation. A Penalty Notice will also be considered:
 - if leave is taken during term time without the permission of the headteacher
 - if a child persistently arrives late after the close of register
 - if a child who has been excluded is seen in a public place during school hours without adult supervision
- The notice will come from the local authority. The fine is £120, and parents will be asked to pay within 28 days. The 28 days starts two days after the date of issue as shown on the notice. If the fine is paid within 21 days, payment reduces to £60. PLEASE BE AWARE when two parents/carers are issued with a penalty notice for the same child, both penalty notices must be paid. The fine will apply to each parent for each child who fails to attend regularly and punctually.

Welcoming Pupils Back

- When pupils return to school after a period of absence we will make sure they are welcomed and know that they have been missed
- The Senior Attendance Champion will coordinate with teachers to ensure that where possible, the pupil can catch up with the work they have missed

- Where necessary, the Senior Attendance Champion will draw up, in coordination with the pupil and parents, a reintegration plan to assist their successful return to school.

Performance

When evaluating success, the school will consider the impact of the work on school attendance by whether or not:

- Overall and Individual attendance has improved
- Persistent absence has reduced
- Punctuality has improved
- Parent/carer response to absence has improved
- Re-integration plans, where implemented, have been successful
- There are specific key groups where a targeted approach is appropriate to raise attendance, e.g., children in receipt of pupil premium.
- The school has been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school, governing body and the local community
- Pupils are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and the attendance procedures operating within school
- Attendance issues have been included as topics in Personal and Social Education (PHSE) lessons, or as a theme for any other lessons

Practice

The school will recognise the importance of good practice by:

- Keeping and maintaining registers accurately
- Maintaining a consistent approach to marking registers
- Regularly analysing attendance data & comparing it against both the local and national average and considering the performance of key groups in comparison to the national data for that particular group.
- Ensuring prompt follow-up action in cases of non-school attendance

- Liaising closely with the school's local authority's Education Welfare Officer, if appropriate
- Recording (and retaining) carefully, all telephone messages/email or contact from parents
- A signed copy of any correspondence to parents is retained by the school

Marking the Register

- The register is a legal document which can be maintained in paper or electronic format. Registers, attendance & absence codes must be recorded accurately, and any paper copies must be marked in ink. The register, or content recorded within it, may be requested in a Court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non-attendance. It may also contribute data to pupils' end-of-term reports, to records of achievement, and to leavers' references.
- No pupil will be marked present unless present in the room when the register is taken or unless he or she has been given permission to be absent by the registering teacher.
- Spaces must not be left in the register.
- The register will be closed 30 minutes after the beginning of the morning session.
- Pupils must not mark the register under any circumstances.
- Attendance data from registers should be monitored appropriately.
- The decision to authorise an absence should be made within a maximum of ten school days from the date of the absence. If no reason has been provided during this time the absence should be recorded as unauthorised.

Appendix 1:

The codes are set out in regulation 10(2) Table 1, 10(3) Table 2 and 10(4) Table 3, 10(8) and 10(10) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024:

Detailed guidance about the codes can be found on pages 76 – 92 of [“Working Together To Improve School Attendance”](#),

| | |
|---|----|
| Present at school codes | |
| Present - AM | / |
| Present- PM | \ |
| Late arrival before the register is closed | L |
| | |
| Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity Codes | |
| Attending education provision arranged by the local authority | K |
| Attending an educational visit or trip | V |
| Participating in a supervised sporting activity | P |
| Attending Work experience | W |
| Attending any other approved educational activity | B |
| | |
| Absent - leave of Absence | |
| Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad. | C1 |
| Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment | M |
| Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution | J1 |
| Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination | S |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school | X |
| Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable | C2 |
| Dual registered at another school | D |
| Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance | C |
| | |
| Absent - Other Authorised Reasons | |
| Parent travelling for occupational purposes | T |
| Religious observance | R |
| Illness (not medical or dental appointment) | I |
| Suspended or permanently excluded | E |
| | |
| Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause | |
| Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements | Q |
| Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available | Y1 |
| Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel | Y2 |
| Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed | Y3 |
| Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed | Y4 |
| Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention | Y5 |
| Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law | Y6 |
| Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause | Y7 |
| | |

| | |
|--|----------|
| Absent - unauthorised absence | |
| Holiday not granted by the school | G |
| Reason for absence not yet established | N |
| Absent in other or unknown circumstances | O |
| Arrived in school after registration closed | U |
| | |
| Administrative codes | |
| Prospective pupil not on admission register | Z |
| Planned whole school closure | # |
| | |
| <u>Refer to pages 77 - 92 of Working Together to Improve School Attendance for details</u> | |

Appendix 2

Example Text Messages

“Your child has missed X number of lessons this year. Lessons build on what children already know and missing one may make tomorrow’s lesson more difficult.”

“Your child has missed X number of days of school this year.”

“One day could be as many as seven missed lessons, as well as time spent with friends and doing extracurricular activities.”

“You can support your child’s physical, social and mental wellbeing by ensuring they are in school every day.”

“We know that parents and carers worry about their children’s mental health. Rather than keeping your child off school, let us know about your concerns. We can then work together on supporting your child.”

“It can be difficult to know whether your child is too ill to attend school. NHS guidance is clear that it’s fine to send them in with a minor cough or common cold, provided they don’t have a temperature.”

“School is an enriching environment that can help your child with their social and mental wellbeing.”

“School isn’t just about learning. It’s a warm, supportive environment where your child can get a healthy meal and see their friends.”

“School attendance is important for equipping your child with skills for life.”

“Attending school every day can help your child to achieve their aspirations, and the aspirations you have for them.”

“We are delighted to celebrate that [NAME] achieved 100% attendance last week. We thank you for your continued support to ensure [NAME] attends school every day.”

“We have the same expectations as [neighbouring primary or secondary school]. This means you will hear the same messages for the other children in your family as we work closely on attendance as a local partnership of schools.”

“We know your child has special educational needs and this can lead to them sometimes not finding school straightforward or as easy as they would like. We understand this and want to work with your child, and with you, on helping your child feel confident to explain any concerns. We can then work together to help provide reassurance and support.”

Appendix 3: Letter 1, Letter of concern

Dear Parent/Carer of {Pupil Name}

We need your help, please.

{Pupil Name} has been absent for {#} days of school, which is equal to {#} lessons missed so far this school year.

We know that sometimes our pupils cannot come to school because they are really unwell - and that's the right thing to do for them and other students. Medical advice is clear however that children with mild illness will often be well enough to attend - for example if they have a cough, or cold, without a temperature. The NHS guidance [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/when-to-call-the-doctor/) is designed to support parents in their decision making about mild illness.

We also know that pupils fall behind their friends and classmates when they miss school. At _____ school we want the amount of missed education to be reduced as much as possible. We believe that our community is stronger together, with all of our pupils in school, on time, every day. We are building life skills, life-long friendships and preparing your child for future success.

We also know that you can have a significant effect on {Pupil Name} absences this academic year and we would really appreciate your help and support ensuring that {Pupil Name} comes to school every day so that they can get the best possible outcomes. We want to work with you to achieve this – please call or come in and meet {Pupil Name}'s class teacher or tutor if there is anything we can do to support you or your child. We appreciate that every family's situation is unique.

We will be in touch again to request a meeting with you if we have ongoing concerns about your child's attendance.

Kind regards

Appendix 4: Letter 2, Attendance Meeting Invite

Dear Title, Full Forename and Surname,

RE: School Attendance

Child's Full Forename and Surname, DOB: Insert child's full date of birth DOB

Further to our letter dated DATE, whereby we informed you that Child's forename's attendance had fallen below the school's expectations, *it has been noted he/she has had number further sessions absence with the current attendance as attendance percentage%*. Please find enclosed a copy of their attendance record.

Unfortunately, Child's forename's attendance has failed to improve sufficiently. I am therefore inviting you to attend a School Attendance Meeting at name of school on date **MUST BE GIVEN AT LEAST 7 DAYS NOTICE** at time. If you are unable to attend on this date, please contact the school as a matter of urgency to arrange a mutually convenient time.

This meeting is an opportunity to discuss any concerns; look at support and develop an action plan to encourage improved attendance. If you do not attend this meeting it will be held in your absence and the notes will be sent to you.

I would like to remind you that parents / carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education. *As per the definition in section 576 of the Education Act 1996 it is your responsibility to ensure Child's forename attends school regularly and on time. Should Child's forename continue to accumulate further sessions of unauthorised absence then we will consider referring you to Herefordshire Council who may issue a penalty notice or initiate legal proceedings against you under the Education Act 1996 (Section 444).*

If you are experiencing any difficulties, or do not understand aspects of this letter please contact me on the above telephone number. We look forward to meeting with you and thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Full Forename, Surname

Headteacher / Senior Attendance Champion

CC: Title, full forename, surname of other parents / carers / those with parental responsibility – then send separate copies (if at different address), post to these, making sure to amend the addressee, address, CC details etc.