



Westbourne
House School

CHICHESTER

ATTENDANCE & CHILD MISSING EDUCATION POLICY

This is the policy of Westbourne House School, which incorporates the Prep School, Pre-Prep, Early Years Foundation Stage as well as provision for boarding

Policy Statement

At Westbourne House, education is seen as a partnership between the family and the school. The school is committed to providing the highest quality of education for all pupils and parents/guardians are asked to support this objective, along with good attendance which is an integral part of the school's ethos and culture.

Every pupil has the right to a full-time education and high attendance expectation is set for all pupils and take account for specific needs of the pupils/cohort. The policy is applied fairly and consistently and doing so the school considers the individual needs of the pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. In developing and implementing this policy, the school considers its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Aims

In regard to attendance, the school follows the DfE Guidance – *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (August 2024), together with the DfE statutory guidance: *Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities* (August 2024) – also see Appendix 1.

For pupils to benefit fully from the educational opportunities provided by the school, they must have high levels of attendance and punctuality; this is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures and responsibilities. The school believes it is in the best interest of all concerned that requests for authorised leave are made honestly and that pupils are not complicit in concealing reasons for their absence.

Consistent and regular attendance is a requirement of the school and it is recognised that good attendance is a learned behaviour. In exceptional circumstances, such as a pandemic, prolonged illness, recuperation or for compassionate reasons that result in extended absence, the school will provide work (either on-line or in hard-copy) and facilitate a pupil's return to full time education within an agreed time frame.

Practice and Procedure

As well as the policy being available on the school's website, it is sent to all parents of new pupils as they start and current parents are reminded of it at the beginning of each school year and when it is updated.

All attendance and punctuality are monitored and parents are asked to inform the school of absence of any kind. Attendance and absence is recorded within the Registration Manager module of the school's database – iSAMS and is preserved for 6 years. Any pre-authorised absence is also recorded within 'Out of School' on iSAMS, so that staff can easily gain access to it and it is also visible when taking a register. Any unreported absence is followed up immediately with a telephone call to the parents/carer/guardian and subsequently recorded on the electronic register as appropriate.

The DSL (Mr Peter Fisher) has overall responsibility for attendance and is recognised as the school's Senior Attendance Champion (dsl@westbournehouse.org). Weekly reports are produced and disseminated by the DSL to the Senior Management Team (SMT) for review and concerns are addressed as outlined above. The school recognises that if there is a need to improve attendance it is a school leadership issue and the DSL has responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school and liaising with pupils, parents and external agencies where needed. Good attendance is incentivised via an individualised approach and high expectations of the DSL and pastoral staff who praise good punctuality and quickly address emerging patterns.

Expected attendance is at least 92% (national average) and it is worth noting that 10% absence is the equivalent of one day or more per fortnight across a full school year. If attendance drops to as low as 90%, then the DSL/Senior Attendance Champion will initially write to parents to ascertain if there is anything the school can do to assist with attendance/punctuality. Following this initial intervention, the pupil's attendance will be monitored and if no improvement is seen then parents will be asked to attend a meeting with the form teacher and a member of the pastoral management team/DSL in the Prep School or the Pre-Prep Form Teacher and Head of Pre-Prep to discuss what measures can/will be implemented to improve attendance.

If there is still no further/sufficient improvement, within the agreed time frame, the school may refer the matter to the Local Authority (LA) through the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The school will alert the LA about any pupils who misses 15 consecutive or cumulative days due to illness, as they may need additional support. The LA has the right to examine and take extracts of attendance registers should they deem it necessary. Please also refer to Appendix 1 – Child Missing Education.

The school is particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special education needs and/or disabilities, and provides them with additional support. In developing this support, the usual processes relevant to any attendance case apply:

- Understanding the individual needs of the pupil and family
- Working in partnership with the pupil and family to put in-school support in place and working with the LA and other agencies where external support is needed (and available)

- Regularly reviewing and updating the support approach to make sure it continues to meet the individual needs

All pupils are required to be in school by 8.25am. The school day ends at:

- **Pre-Prep (including EYFS):**
 - *Monday to Friday:* 3.15pm
- **Prep School:**
 - *Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday:*
 - Years 3&4: 4.30pm
 - NB: Some Year 3&4 pupils may be involved in matches on a Thursday. If this is the case and parents are watching the match, they may take their child home directly (after having 'signed-out' with the teacher in charge of the match)
 - Year 5: 5.15pm
 - Year 6: 5.20pm
 - Year 7: 5.25pm
 - Year 8: 5.30pm
 - *Wednesday*
 - Years 3-8: 3.45pm
 - NB: If involved in matches, pick-up times are advised in advance on the school's Sports Portal (SOCS/Teamsheet)
 - *Saturday*
 - Years 4-8 depart after matches (either morning or afternoon) and/or optional activities – pick-up times are advised in advance on the school's Sports Portal (SOCS/Teamsheet)
 - All sport matches are compulsory
 - Activities are optional and pupils must sign up for these by noon on the preceding Thursday
 - Morning Optional Activities: 10am to 12pm
 - Afternoon Optional Activities: 1pm to 3pm

Many pupils remain at school later than their official finish time to take part in extra activities under the supervision of a member of staff/club leader (Monday to Friday). Registers are taken manually at the beginning of these activities and, should a child be missing and staff have not been informed previously, their whereabouts will be checked with the School Secretary (Pre-Prep and Prep School).

Unless pre-authorised, pupils are not allowed to leave the site during the school day and should attend all lessons. Pupils are always accompanied by staff when attending trips, visits or sporting fixtures, the dates/times of which will have been notified to parents in advance and via the school's termly calendar and email.

Registration

The school is required by law to maintain an Attendance Register and pupils are registered at least twice a day as follows:

- Pre-Prep and Y3&4:
 - At the beginning of the morning session/upon arrival
 - At the beginning of the afternoon session/after lunch

- Y5-8:
 - At the beginning of the morning session/upon arrival
 - At the beginning of the afternoon session/after lunch
 - At the beginning of the afternoon prep session (at 4.45pm)

Registration and Absence/Attendance Codes

Registration is electronic and done using the school's information management system, iSAMS. The school uses the DfE National Codes for absence to record attendance; detailed guidance on the codes (as listed below) is also available in Chapter 8 of [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance) which is consulted in any cases of uncertainty.

Code	Reason	Status	Comment
/	Present (morning)	Attendance	
\	Present (afternoon)	Attendance	
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence	"Where absence is recorded as code N (reason not yet established) in the attendance register, the correct absence code should be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 school days after the session ... Code N must not therefore be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, schools must amend the pupil's record to Code O."
L	Late (before register closed)	Attendance	
U	Late (after Register closed)	Unauthorised absence	"If a pupil is recorded with code N but arrives later in the session after the register has closed, the attendance

			register must be amended to record them as absent using code U or another absence code that is more appropriate.”
M	Medical/Dental Appointment	Unauthorised absence	
I	Illness	Unauthorised absence	
O	Other unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence	
K	Educated off site (arranged by Local Authority)	Attendance (attending an approved educational activity)	
S	Study Leave	Authorised absence	
V	Educational Visit or Trip	Attendance (attending an approved educational activity)	
P	Approved Sporting Activity	Attendance (attending an approved educational activity)	
R	Religious Observance	Authorised absence	“If a religious body sets apart a single day for a religious observance and the parent applies for more than one day, the school may only record one day using this code; the rest of the time would need a leave of absence, and this is granted at the school’s discretion as set out under Code C.”
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised absence	
E	Suspended or Excluded	Unauthorised absence	
W	Work Experience	Attendance (attending an approved educational activity)	
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Not a possible attendance	
J1	Interview	Authorised absence	
B	Educated off site (other)	Attendance (attending an approved educational activity)	
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not a possible attendance	
T	Mobile child	Authorised absence	
D	Dual registration	Not a possible attendance	

C1	Regulated performance/regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence	
C2	Temporary part-time education	Authorised absence	
C	Absent with leave for any other purpose	Authorised absence	
Y1	School/local authority arranged transport unavailable	Not a possible attendance	
Y2	Widespread travel disruption	Not a possible attendance	
Y3	Premises out of use	Not a possible attendance	
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Not a possible attendance	
Y5	Criminal Justice Detention	Not a possible attendance	
Y6	Health Department Guidance/Prohibition	Not a possible attendance	
Y7	Other unavoidable cause	Not a possible attendance	
#	Planned whole school closure	N/A – non-statutory code	Planned school closures eg: half terms, bank holidays

The registration period is open for 30 minutes and any pupil arriving after 8.30am but before the end of the registration period will be recorded as Late. Pupils missing from morning registration, without a valid reason, will be registered by their Form teacher with an O (Unauthorised absence) which is updated with the appropriate code once the reason has been established by the School Secretary (in both the Pre-Prep and Prep School).

For any unexplained absences, in the first instance the School Secretaries check-in with the Music Department and Matrons Department to ensure that the pupil is not in an early private music lesson or has visited the school nurse. If the pupil is not located from this initial investigation around school then a phone call will be made to the parents/carer/guardian of any pupils to ascertain the reason for absence which is then recorded accordingly in iSAMS. From this call, should it be ascertained that the pupil was in fact dropped off at school but was not at registration, then the School Secretaries will put the Lost Child Procedure in place (please refer to Appendix 3 of the Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy).

Once the registration session has closed and all pupils are accounted for, the Pre-Prep and Prep School Secretaries print off a copy of the day's absence report and school diary and post to the:

- Fire Board (in both the Pre-Prep and Prep School)
- School Nurse/Matrons' Department
- Catering Staff
- Sport Teachers (both Head of Boys' Sport and Head of Girls' Sport)
- Assistant Director of Studies during exam periods

Afternoon registration takes place at:

- **Pre-Prep (including EYFS):**
 - *Monday to Friday: 1.30pm*
- **Years 3&4:**
 - *Monday to Friday: Period 4b – 1.30pm*
- **Years 5-8:**
 - *Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday: Period 4c – 2.00pm*
 - *Wednesday: Period 4a – 12.30pm*

As per the morning registration, any pupils missing from afternoon registration without a valid reason will be registered by their Form teacher with an O (Unauthorised absence) and the same system that is used during the morning is put in place to ascertain the whereabouts of the pupil.

Pupils leaving the school site because of a medical appointment or an approved absence are required to be signed out at the School Offices and in again if/when they return.

If a pupil feels ill during the day, they should notify a member of staff in the Pre-Prep or, if in the Prep School, they should report to the Matrons' Department to be assessed. If a pupil is too ill to remain at school, the parents/carer/guardian will be contacted. Pupils must not contact their parents directly and ask to be taken home.

Y5-8 Afternoon Prep Registration

Additionally, a Prep Registration (in form rooms) takes place at 4.45pm for Years 5 to 8 using iSAMs and the codes outlined above. The purpose of this additional registration is to ensure that the children are accounted for during the final sessions of the day which necessitates movement across the site for children involved in activities other than prep e.g. Chapel Choir, Orchestra and the academic clinics.

Saturday Registration

In order for the School's Saturday programme (compulsory sports fixtures and optional activities) to run smoothly and safely, as well as ensuring that attendance lists are accurate, pupils are requested to register as follows:

- **Optional Morning/Afternoon Activities:** pupils arrive at the Dining Hall for registration prior to being dismissed to the location of their chosen activity. The same process, used during the week, is put in place if a pupil is missing from their chosen activity.
- **Sport Fixtures:** pupils register with their sports coach as follows:
 - **Away Matches:** at the front pillars prior to departure (time advised on SOCS/teamsheet)
 - Parents are requested to advise the School Office (by 5.30pm on the preceding Friday evening) if it is their intention to take their child directly to his/her away fixture. This in turn is annotated on the paper copy of the teamsheet for the sports coach – held centrally in the school office – which is used by the sports coach as the register.
 - **Home Matches:** at pitch-side (time advised on SOCS/teamsheet)
 - **Optional Sports Programme/Training:** if a pupil is not involved in a match but would like to attend the optional sports programme/training; parents are requested to sign their child up for this by the end of the day on the preceding Friday. As with optional activities, pupils must arrive at the Dining Hall for registration prior to being dismissed to the location of their sports training session.

Saturday's registration is performed manually/in a paper format and filed weekly (as appropriate) in the Prep School Office – all other procedures apply as noted above.

Medical Appointments

The school requests that parents try to avoid making external appointments for their children during the school day. For medical appointments arranged necessarily at short notice, requests for authorised absence should be made to the School Office and copied to the Form Teacher.

Exceptional Leave

Requests for exceptional absence must be made in writing to the Headmaster (hma@westbournehouse.org) or the Head of Pre-Prep (pph@westbournehouse.org) and should reach the school at least 10 days in advance.

Whilst it is preferred that absence in term time is avoided, each request will be considered individually and decisions made based on a number of criteria including:

- The stage the pupil has reached in his/her school career
- His/her academic record
- The unique nature of the absence
- If the request is to participate in an off-site co-curricular activity such as sport or drama, the level of representation will be considered
- Whether the pupil is sponsored on a Child Student visa

The school understands that on occasions there are extenuating reasons why a pupil may need to be away from school and the Headmaster or Head of Pre-Prep will provide authorisation where there are compassionate grounds. Parents are asked to provide as much advance notification and detail as possible, so that each request can be considered carefully.

All parents considering making a request for a holiday or absence for recreational reasons in term time are asked to weigh up/consider the following points:

- The school year generally has between 180-190 days. Term dates are published sufficiently in advance to allow parents to make use of remaining days in the calendar year for holiday purposes.
- Missed lessons place pupils at an academic disadvantage and may have unsettling effects, both socially and academically. Other pupils may be disadvantaged due to the disruption caused by absence and it is always the responsibility of the pupil to catch up with any work that is missed in the Prep School and the responsibility of the parent in the Pre-Prep.
- If the request is not authorised then the period of absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the school register. In exceptional circumstances the school may ask to meet with parents to discuss any unaccounted periods of absence. All leave for holidays is at the discretion of the school (either from the Head of Pre-Prep or the Headmaster) and not an automatic entitlement. The basic framework and guidance is taken from [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk), which states that leave of absence should not be granted unless:
 - An application has been made in advance to the proprietor by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides; and
 - The proprietor, or person authorised by the proprietor in accordance with paragraph (1), considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.
- National Views – There has been a national campaign to maximise school attendance with fines imposed on irresponsible parents and, in extreme cases, the imposition by courts of parenting orders. In April 2017, the Supreme Court upheld a ban on term time holidays in state schools noting the disruptive effect of the learning on the individual child and on other pupils.

Child Student Sponsored Pupils

The school holds a Child Student sponsor licence which allows it to sponsor pupils under the Child Student route of the points-based immigration system. The school takes its responsibilities as a Child Student sponsor seriously, including monitoring sponsored pupils' engagement with their studies and reporting any changes to the UK Home Office.

In particular, the school has a duty to withdraw sponsorship of any pupil that misses 10 consecutive 'expected contact points'. The school defines an 'expected contact point' as a 'School Day' (which includes a morning and afternoon session).

Form Teachers are informed of any Child Student sponsored pupils in their class and that any unauthorised or unexplained absence of such a pupil should be immediately reported to the PA to Headmaster in the first instance. Action will be taken in accordance with the procedures outlined above and the school may request medical evidence as appropriate.

If attendance does not improve and a Child Student sponsored pupil accrues a total of 10 consecutive unauthorised absences on ‘School Days,’ the school will ask the pupil to leave the school. The school will make a report to the UK Home Office within 10 working days of the withdrawal, with a copy of the report saved on the sponsored pupil’s record.

In the event of a period of long term-authorized absence (eg due to illness), the school will assess whether the pupil can still complete their course within their current Child Student visa, consulting with the pupil and their parent/guardian accordingly.

If the school concludes this will not be possible, the school will ask the pupil to leave the school. The school will make a report to the UK Home Office within 10 working days of the withdrawal, with a copy of the report saved on the sponsored pupil’s record.

Monitoring and review

The School acknowledges that barriers to attendance can evolve quickly and will therefore ensure that this policy is reviewed, monitored and updated for its effectiveness and compliance (and appendices – if appropriate); in doing so it will seek the views of pupils and parents. This policy will also be kept up-to-date and amended to take account of legislative and regulatory changes.

Last Review Date	Next Review Date	Reviewer(s)
January 2025	October 2025	Deputy Head – Academic Head of Pastoral Care Admissions Manager DSL (<i>Senior Attendance Champion</i>) PA to Headmaster – <i>in conjunction with the School Secretaries</i>

Appendix 1 – Child Missing Education

A child missing education, particularly repeatedly, may be an indicator of abuse or neglect. In addition to the procedures to follow if a child goes missing from school, staff should have in mind the potential safeguarding concerns relating to child sexual exploitation, travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage (see Child Protection Safeguarding Policy – Appendices 1, 3 & 4).

The School has due regard to Children Missing Education (August 2024) for information regarding the lawful grounds for removing a pupil and the information to be reported to the local authority in particular, the guidance as set out under the section ‘*Schools’ Responsibilities*’.

The School also has regard for the guidance contained within *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023* and *Keeping Children Safe in Education September (2024)* and *Working together to improve school attendance Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities August 2024*.

Aims

In order to safeguard pupils, Westbourne House School undertakes to do the following:

- Maintain an admission and an attendance register.
 - Ensuring that the school holds two emergency numbers for each pupil on the school role, which includes details of each parent (where appropriate) and at least one telephone contact number for each.
- Review the attendance percentages regularly to spot patterns of high absenteeism: an attendance percentage below 90% will trigger consideration as to the appropriate next course of action, whether pastoral, disciplinary, parental or child protection.
- Ensures that all staff are trained/informed of the school’s safeguarding responses to children missing from education and are instructed to inform the school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) when there are concerns about a child missing from education on repeat occasions. This should be done by completing the school’s Concern Form (available in both staff rooms and on the staff’s Google Shared Drive).
- Inform West Sussex Local Authority (copying in, where the child is normally resident in another local authority, that local authority also) if a child is to be removed from, or added to, the admission register at non-standard transitions, i.e. where a compulsory school-aged child leaves a school before completing the school’s final year. This is done within five days of the transition.
- Liaise with the local authority if any pupil fails to attend school regularly, or if any pupil has been absent without the school’s permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more, or is absent from school for reasons statistically recorded as unauthorised absence for twenty consecutive school days.
- The school will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school, but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority

- When a pupil leaves the school, we will record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date.
- The School recognises the importance of 'attendance champions' and the DSL serves in this capacity. Weekly absence data is shared by the DSL to SMT for monitoring purposes.